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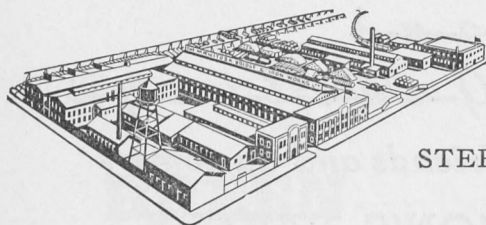
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The Icelandic Canadian

Vol. 9

WINNIPEG, MAN., WINTER 1950

No. 2

75th Anniversary Commemorated

October 11th this year marked the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg. To mark this occasion, and also the arrival of the first settlers at Gimli ten days later, concerts were held in Winnipeg and at Gimli.

The Winnipeg Press took special notice of the occasion, the Free Press particularly giving it excellent space and editorial comment.

In its foreword to a series of three articles on the Icelandic pioneers, published in its columns, the week of Oct. 11th, the Free Press opens with these remarks: "Wednesday, Manitoba's Icelandic colony celebrated the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the first group of Icelandic permanent settlers in Winnipeg. To mark this occasion and to honor a group which has made such a valuable contribution to the province's life, the Free Press is publishing a series of articles by Jon K. Laxdal of Winnipeg . . ."

A few days later, in an editorial the Free Press refers to the Autumn issue of the Icelandic Canadian magazine, which was mainly devoted to the 75th anniversary, several articles featuring the event.

In this editorial the Free Press says in part:

"A series of articles appearing in the Free Press in the past few days has drawn attention to a memorable chapter in the history of the Canadian West—the settlement of the Icelandic colonists along the shore of Lake Winnipeg, begun in 1875.

"Out of a bleak wilderness these determined and courageous people created a community that has made rich contributions, both materially and culturally, to this province and to Canada. It is a saga of triumph over hardship and affliction that ranks with the experience of the first Scottish colonists along the Red River.

"The story as told by Mr. Jon K. Laxdal of Winnipeg contains a wealth of detail that is missing, unfortunately, from the official histories.

"Mr. Laxdal is also a contributor to the Autumn issue of the Icelandic Canadian, recently off the press, which commemorates the founding of the Lake Winnipeg colony 75 years ago. In it a number of articles by descendants of the Icelandic pioneers round out a most interesting symposium on the Icelandic-Canadian heritage."

In an editorial in **Heimskringla**, Stefan Einarsson commends the Icelandic Canadian for devoting a number of feature articles in the Autumn issue, to the history and heritage of the early settlers, remarking that articles of this nature are most necessary to keep alive the memory of the pioneers.

A concert sponsored by the Icelandic National League, with the president, Rev. P. M. Petursson in the chair, was held in the First Lutheran Church, Oct. 12, to mark the 75th anniversary. Addresses were delivered on the pioneer theme by Jon J. Bildfell, (in Icelandic), and Wilhelm Kristjanson, (in English). Both talks were informative

and interesting as could be expected from Mr. Bildfell and Mr. Kristjanson who have done a great deal of research into early pioneer history. Mr. Kristjanson is at present engaged in writing the history of the Icelanders in Manitoba, for the Manitoba Historical Society. His address appears in this issue of the magazine. Mr. Bildfell's address was published in Lögberg and Heimskringla.

Hannes Kjartanson, Icelandic Consul in New York, brought greetings from his government and spoke briefly. He was accompanied by his charming wife, Elin, a daughter of the late Rev. Jonas A. Sigurdson and Mrs. Sigurdson, who now lives with her daughter in New York.

Violin solos were given by Palmi Palmason and Mrs. Pearl Johnson sang a group of numbers. Mrs. Johnson is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Halldor Thorolfson and sister of the well known musician Frank Thorolfson. Pearl's mother Fridrika was the first girl of Icelandic parentage to be born in Winnipeg, her parents Friðrik and Sigríður Sigurbjornsson having been the first Icelandic couple married in the city.

A much larger attendance could have been expected at this concert marking such an historic occasion.

To mark the actual date of the landing, at Willow Point, of the early pioneers who founded New Iceland, on October 21st, 1875, the Gimli Women's Institute arranged a choral concert which filled the parish hall on Friday, Oct. 20th.

A mixed choir from Riverton, Arborg, Framnes, Hnausa, Arnes, Vidir, Geysir and Gimli (which are the towns and villages in the New Iceland district), conducted by Johannes Palsson, with Mrs. Lilja Martin as accompanist,

gave a number of selections in Icelandic and English. Mr. Olafur Kardal, accompanied by Mrs. Kardal gave a group of songs. He sang in Icelandic, English, Italian and German.

As a tribute to the founders of Gimli, members of the Women's Institute staged a tableau depicting the landing of the first settlers, and closed with the hymn, "Faith of our fathers".

Other items on the programme included: duet by Lorna Stefanson and Lenny Martin, accompanied by Mrs. Anna Stevens; vocal solos by Sylvia Palsson and Miss Martin; a violin solo by J. Palsson and piano solo by Miss Sylvia Holm.

Mr. E. J. Sigurjonson, principal of the Gimli school, was chairman.

Altogether it may be said that the 75th anniversary was well observed publicly; including these articles in the Winnipeg Free Press, and the Icelandic Canadian magazine, the two concerts, one in Winnipeg and one at Gimli, and the August celebration at Gimli this summer which was dedicated to the anniversary.

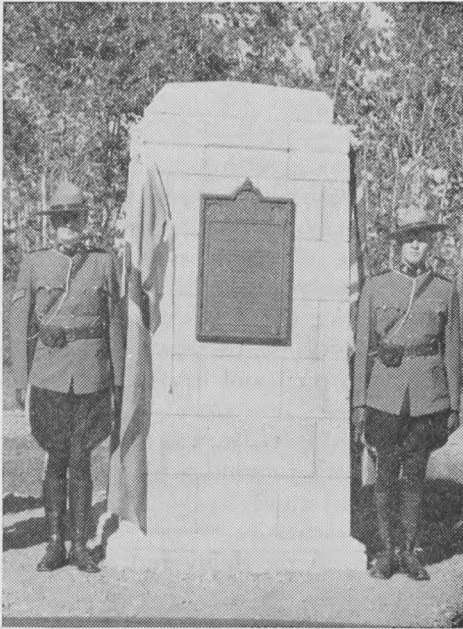
At that time the Icelandic weeklies published the main speeches and the poems delivered at the celebration, as well as numerous other interesting items pertaining to the anniversary, including an article by J. J. Bildfell which gave a review of the part played by the Icelanders in the fishing industry of Manitoba. But perhaps the most fervent commemoration of all took place in the hearts and minds of those who still remember the first years of struggle, or have heard their parents eloquently tell of the old days. It is to be hoped that the generations to come will cherish and keep bright the memory of these dauntless pioneers who have bequeathed such a rich legacy to their descendants. **H. D.**

PROF. SKULI JOHNSON:*Stephan G. Stephansson (1853-1927)*

An address delivered at the unveiling of a monument and the dedication of a provincial park in his honour, at Markerville, Alberta, on September 4th, 1950.

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply conscious of the honour done me by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in inviting me to address you on this memorable occasion. It is one of importance in the history of Alberta, and indeed



Unveiling of the Stephan G. Stephansson monument, September 4, showing R.C.M.P. who as guard of honor, formed part of the group participating in the ceremony.

of Canada as a whole; assuredly it is unique in the annals of Icelandic men in America. But as an old Icelandic adage expresses it: **a difficulty accompanies every distinction:** the honour of participating in these proceedings puts on my shoulders a heavy responsibility.

Fortunately the reputation of the dead will not be permanently impaired by my remarks. There is further comfort in the reflection that no reasonable person will expect me to do justice to so vast a theme as Stephan G. Stephansson in the short time at my disposal.

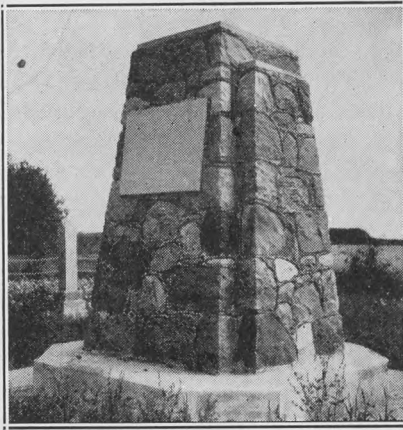
But the brevity of time might cause me to make dogmatic assertions about the poet, and my enthusiasm for him both as an author and as a man might lead me to indulge in exaggerations. In order to guard against these faults, I shall throughout seek a footing in facts and illustrate the points I make by appeals to his poetry. Needless to say, my citations, though they are as adequate as I can make them, are insufficient for a complete picture: they present what the Romans would call the scattered limbs of a poet (*disiecta membra poetae*).

I.

There is nothing in the antecedents or in the circumstances of Stephan G. Stephansson to account for him. Of humble peasant origin, he was reared on a little farm-annex in northern Iceland, which was so poor that it long ago went back into wasteland. He had no formal education; his only reading was in borrowed sagas and in the family Bible. For sixteen years he laboured as a pioneer in Wisconsin and North Dakota and was little known. It was when he migrated to Canada to become a pioneer in Alberta that his poetic powers really matured. The prairie-land, the foothills and the

Rockies made him a poet of national significance.

St. G. St. is essentially in the peasant-poet tradition of Iceland. He has a passion for the intricate forms that mark the native Ballad-poetry of the unlettered, and his love of the Icelandic quatrain in all its diversities is evidenced by his abundant output of this kind of verse. Of his six volumes perhaps a fourth is devoted to this literary genre. But St. G. St. steeped himself besides in the earlier lore and literature of his land, and for both matter



Monument which marks the last resting place of the poet, erected by his family and friends as a permanent testimony of their love and respect.

and metre, he often goes back to the Eddas and the Scaldic poetry. His knowledge of the Saga-literature of Iceland is also amazing, and he is especially fond of delineating potent personages of the past who confronted difficulties or who broke new paths. Often too does he correlate an incident of the past with some vital problem of the present. He thus puts the precious ore that he has mined from the inexhaustible wealth of Iceland's culture to use for his contemporaries, not only in Iceland but also on this continent where he laboured so long and

arduously. He has a firm footing in the past and in the present; he stands on Iceland and America; indeed in his intelligent interest in humanity, and his passionate advocacy of the solution of problems of world-wide importance, this bard-colossus bestrides the earth!

II.

St. G. St. however regarded himself as no world-figure but primarily as a pioneering farmer. He was proud to be a tiller:

I am a farmer; all I own
Is under sun and shower.

This idea influences much of his thought; indeed it colours his concept of life:

Life is a growth;
Progress is life's true happiness.

Barrenness of spirit is the worst fate
that he can wish for his enemies:
Send me for foemen persons who

possess

A wintry spirit and hearts verdureless.

At times St. G. St. waxes lyrical over the precious imponderables which his farmer-soul enjoys:

What worth on fields and flocks you
place?

What worth on dollars any
Against the wealth, the verse and grace
Of summer-ev'nings many?

Again and again St. G. St. calls to mind ideas familiar to us from the Ayrshire ploughman:

External sheen to rank extreme
Ne'er raised a man up, but
A kingly nature crowns supreme
The crofter in his hut.

Nowhere does the poet put his evaluation of pioneering work more arrestingly than in his query:

Yet was not the Baptist
Greater than the Messiah?

nor his affection for creative energy more effectively than in his assertion to the Lord:

Happiest was, I know, for you
The week in which you made the world.

and St. G. St., the energetic farmer-poet, is confident that cherubims were not needed to stand guard at Eden's gate because no one would have the folly to enter into Eden's indolence of perfection. He is equally sure that the angel of the Lord will not for a long time be adequately rewarded for having driven man out "to till for himself a farmland, and to build him a hovel, and by his toil to work towards his hopes, and to sing songs of spring where it had been songless before."

III.

St. G. St. with his vitality and urge for work could have become a well-to-do farmer. As it turned out, however, his entire life was spent in a struggle between the compulsions of duty and the claims of poetry. He had to work unremittingly to maintain himself and his family; his spirit of independence and his sense of manhood did not allow him to do otherwise. But he also had to be true to his poetic calling. His rare moments of inspiration he seldom attempts to describe:

There comes at times an hour
Unstaying, for so it must be,
When a sight, a secret bower,
A crevice is opened for me,

And I, in lightning flashes,
Can clearly see destiny.

but during all his life, with the devotion and the didacticism of a Wordsworth, he remained true to his inner vision. Never felt he more exalted than when he was composing his poetry, for

The longing for all that the loftiest was
Awakes when the verse-staves quiver.

and indeed when he warmed to his creative urge St. G. St. became in mood and mien like to one of his own characters:

Of knee he was bowed and in back
he was bent,
And furrowed in palm and finger:
He seemed like a home-plant that hard-
luck had sent
To heath-wastes, to wither or linger.

But when his mood warmed, he fair
leafage obtained,
And, vital and venturing,
He gleaned him the glow by the
gnarléd boughs gained,
When burst out the buds in the
spring.

In one of his melancholy moments the poet noted, no doubt with some reference to himself:

Whom daily life oppresses e'er
With chores and with delays,
He sinks into his sepulchre
With all his finest lays.

IV.

Very poignant is the poem in which St. G. St. acknowledges that his poetry is the product of his sleepless nights. In it he fancies the muse as upbraiding him for unfairness to her:

To toil you hallowed your day and
your might:

To me you gave tempests, tiredness,
night.

and the poet admits the charge for he
knows full well that the poet's art
should possess his soul undivided:

For the lord of your art
Owns alone your whole heart;
When to duty bow you,
Then your faith turns untrue.

He sometimes feels that he fails in
his task because his thought does vio-
lence to perfection in form:

A thought that's lofty, strong and free,
Invigorates and gladdens me,
But breaks through speech and pros-
ody,
And piles up staves erroneously.

Excessive self-criticism was not how-
ever characteristic of the poet; he
knew that lack of time for revision ac-
counted for some of his lapses and
sometimes in a lighter vein he could
laugh at his own infelicities. Indeed
he poked fun at the prolific verse with
which he and his brother-bards had
flooded the local weeklies.

In a more serious mood however St.
G. St. desired to achieve the utmost
skill in his art, in order to serve better
by his verse the cause of humanity; to
a prominent poet-contemporary in
Iceland he rather ruefully wrote:

The art had yet not fared o'erseas
To freehold in our land;
We could thy verse-sword, whetted,
seize,
And wield it in our hand.

V.

In his more ample western milieu

St. G. St. did indeed wield his verse-
sword as dexterously and as well as
any modern man, in his fight for ideas
and ideals. The strength of his combat-
iveness lay essentially in two things:
in his equipoise between thought and
feeling, and in his sound common-
sense. He was no visionary world-citi-
zen:

A poor pretence is "cosmopolitan",
"World-patriotism" is for every man
Too great: to grasp it our
Short hands have not the power.

But he recognizes that human brother-
hood will lead towards the ideal, the
rule of intelligence and justice:

The first approach to equity and
reason
Is found if men approve of brother-
hood.

and he counsels men:

To think not in the years but in the
ages
Nor ask in full at eve for each day's
wages.

The poet was a lifelong advocate of
the underlings, whether these were
individuals or peoples. From this
source emanated some of his most
severe strictures on men and society.
The poet felt a deep sympathy for
labouring men everywhere, but he
could not identify himself with their
party, any more than he could with
other formal organizations. Indeed his
exacting nature was well aware that
the masses often endorse mediocrity,
and he knew that middling men never
raise the multitude and that a people
is readily reduced to a rabble, lose it

(Continued on page 44)

The Influence of Environment on the Icelandic People in Winnipeg

By W. Kristjanson

An address delivered at a concert sponsored by the Icelandic National League, in the First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, October 12, to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Icelandic settlement in Winnipeg.

The relative importance of heredity and environment in the shaping of our lives is a moot question. Some consider heredity all important; some environment; some that both are factors. Probably the majority of us consider that both are significant.

The importance of environment, forces working from the outside, is strikingly illustrated in a story in a recent issue of MacLean's Magazine, of a nineteen year old Canadian girl who suffered from polio. Full of the joy of life and an attractive girl, she was struck down, helpless, unable to feed herself, pick up a book, comb her hair, or do any of the simple ordinary things one is accustomed to do every day in one's life. When she looked in the mirror, she saw a pair of lustreless eyes, and a wasted white face. Worse than death, she felt, was her helplessness.

With the untiring help of others and the drawing on all her reserves of strength and will-power, she slowly fought her way back to health. Under her doctor's guidance, her mind directed the inert muscles to move, till they finally responded. And she walked and danced again.

But this was not her only victory. Somewhere along the road she realized that she had been a vain, overly critical, completely self-centred girl, spending hours fuzzing with her hair and make-up. When she realized that her people came to see her as she now was, it made her feel warm, grateful,

humble, and a bit ashamed of herself. **Her outlook on life was changed.**

Had she never been tested thus, her latent powers would not have been brought out, and it is problematic when and to what extent her outlook on life would have changed.

Another instance of a great challenge and a splendid response is the story of Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Far back in time, but in one sense close to home, there is another illustration of the importance of the challenge of environment. Due to pressure exercised by a rugged and unyielding country on a growing population in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, the hardy Vikings extended their conquests and settlements to the British Isles, Normandy, Iceland, Russia, and elsewhere. For nearly all these roving bands there was the challenge of an overseas migration, but for those who went to Iceland there was the special challenge of colonization in an unsettled land that was not too easily subdued. Probably, as a result of this combination of circumstances, the Ancient Norse civilization flowered in Iceland, in the sphere of government, law, and literature, as nowhere else. When the Icelandic contingent of Eric the Red settled in Greenland, the natural environment proved too harsh, and this led to the extinction of the settlement. (c/f Arnold Toynbee).

What difference did it make to the Icelandic people who arrived in Win-

nipeg, October 11, 1875, and subsequently, that they settled here, and not in New Iceland, Argyle, Shellmouth, Lundar, Shoal Lake, or elsewhere in Manitoba?

A brief narrative account of their arrival and first settlement will be offered here as a background to this study.

When the first Icelandic contingent arrived in 1875, Winnipeg was a straggling village of some four hundred residential buildings, with many log-houses and a few brick buildings. Two hundred and eighty-five people arrived with the first contingent, including men, women and children. They were all bound for the colony site in New Iceland, selected that summer, but due to the lateness of the season, and total lack of preparation at the colony site, there being no buildings, no hay, and consequently no cattle, and no milk, it was decided that as many as possible would remain behind in Winnipeg.

The number of those who could stay was limited. There were no buildings in which they could be housed. The Immigration Shed was a barn-like place, and not to be considered.

There was virtually no employment, in winter, save domestic service for girls or women.

The number of those who remained the first winter is uncertain. It has been variously estimated at 35 — 50, and over. Probably the higher number is nearer the mark. These were probably mainly single persons.

In the summer of 1876 a large group of some 1200 arrived, direct from Iceland. A considerable number remained in Winnipeg when the main body proceeded to New Iceland, but precisely how many is not known.

In the summer of 1877, which followed the disastrous small-pox epidem-

ic very few Icelandic immigrants arrived but in 1879 and 1880 the flow of numbers increased and in 1883 some 900 Icelandic immigrants arrived in Manitoba. In that year the Icelandic population in Winnipeg numbered 754.

The first Icelandic settlement in Winnipeg, called Shanty Town, was located on the Hudson's Bay Company flats, on the banks of the Red River, and extended from the point where the C.N.R. freight yards are now located, to Water Street. The nucleus of this was formed not later than the fall of 1876. The people had to utilize what odds and ends of lumber they could secure for the least possible money, and most of these shacks were very roughly built. There were two terraces, the houses being built together for warmth, and some single houses or shacks. One of the 1876 builders was Fridrik Sigurbjornsson, grandfather of Mrs. Lincoln Johnson, who appears on our program tonight. Mrs. August Polson, of Winnipeg, lived in Shanty Town as a girl, and remembers the place very well. After 2—3 years, the Icelandic settlement extended to Point Douglas, and there were a few houses on or near Main Street. After 1880, Ross and Jemima (now Elgin Ave.) became the centre of settlement.

For the Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg there was in some respect a special handicap, or challenge, and in some respects they were favorably situated. Let us consider the handicaps first.

There was the barrier of ignorance and prejudice. Despite much well-informed and favorable advance publicity in the Winnipeg papers, there were some in the crowd that thronged down to the landing place on the evening of the 11th to meet the incoming party arriving on the steamer **International**, whose preconceived ideas of

Icelandic people were wide of the mark.

"Where are the Icelanders? Show us the Icelanders!" was the exclamation. John Taylor, the government Agent with the Icelandic party, pointed to the group.

"There are the Icelanders. You can see them there".

But he was not believed.

"We know what the Icelanders look like. They are short, about four feet. Rather stout and thick-set, with long black hair, and much like the Eskimos. These people are not Icelanders. They are white people."

It should be noted that only a section of the populace would betray such ignorance; the readers of the *Free Press* and other papers would know better. And those who met the incoming party were favorably impressed and, says the *Free Press*, October 12, 1875:

"They are a smart-looking and intelligent and excellent people, and a most valuable acquisition to the population of our Province. Their Icelandic experience, supplemented with some experience in our mode of life, is quite sufficient to give them that peculiar off-hand manner of overcoming obstacles, and energy of character which will ensure their success here". But there was a certain amount of prejudice, and those who settled in the city would bear the brunt of this, in addition to the people from the New Iceland Colony who periodically sought employment in Manitoba.

There was the challenge of adjustment and integration for the small Icelandic group in a city, which by 1879 numbered some ten thousand people. The Icelanders were dispersed in their various places of employment, working among a people of another nationality and speaking another language.

They were at first mainly single people, away from their families. The settlers in the New Iceland colony were among their own kith and kin.

There was a special challenge in the type of work, as the field of employment opened up. The New Iceland settlers farmed and fished, familiar employments both, but the people in Winnipeg, after the days of buck-saw and pick and shovel, were more rapidly initiated into the business world and in the skilled trades.

There was a different background for the development of community organization, in Winnipeg and in the Colony. In the Colony, there was a solidly Icelandic settlement, with no obstacle to Icelandic community life and organizations. In Winnipeg, forces working for dispersal had to be overcome. The hours of work were long, and in the case of women in domestic service, only some of the evenings were free. In the first five years of settlement, there was much fluctuation of population, people coming and going, and a special effort was required to maintain effective organizations. Under the circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the story of the first few years in Winnipeg is not as well defined and developed, as in New Iceland.

But the people responded to the challenge, and very shortly an active and varied community life developed, witness the founding of the Icelandic organized classes in English and the Icelandic school (in the winter of 1876-77); the Icelandic Society, later the Progressive Society (1877); the Trinity Congregation (1878); The choral society, "Gigjan" (by 1880); the Icelandic Investment Company (1880); The Icelandic Women's Society (1881); the Oriental Society (1882); the Temperance Society (1884); and later,

the Good Templar Lodges, (1887-88) and the Icelandic Labor Association (1890), and other organizations. Also, the weekly newspapers, *Leifur* (1883-86); *Heimskringla* (1886-) and *Lögberg* (1888-), and the religious periodical *Sameiningin* (1885-) were founded.

In the field of employment, the young women learned about cooking and housekeeping in the Canadian way. The men, whose first employment was of the casual and common labor type, sawing wood, loading cargo on the diver steamers, and, in the summertime, work on the railroad, began to branch out into other fields about 1880, chiefly carpenter work, but also in the stores. The first Icelandic owned store in Winnipeg was established in 1879.

It is not being suggested that there was a greater environmental challenge in Winnipeg than in New Iceland, where the struggle for subsistence, what with the thick forest, the smallpox epidemic of 1876-77, and the flood of 1880, constituted a very severe challenge indeed, but in one sense it was greater. The Icelandic people in Winnipeg had their own individuality, their own soul to fight for, and at the same time not to remain aloof from the native population, but to fit into the local pattern. This they succeeded in doing, and for this they were highly commended by the local English language papers, and by others. Also the nature of the challenge was more varied, and likewise the response.

The difference between the Winnipeg and New Iceland settlements in the second five years of their existence was that the former was well-started on the road to success, while the latter, owing to the severe challenge from the natural environment, and perhaps more so the inner challenge of religious factionalism, had suffered a very

serious initial setback, and has never lived up to its founders' dreams.

Some of the more obviously favorable factors will now be considered. The Winnipeg location brought its Icelandic citizens into the main-stream of events. In 1885 when the North West Rebellion took place, some twenty Icelanders served. The great majority of these were from Winnipeg. Even before the war, perhaps four Icelanders had joined the Winnipeg Rifles, and immediately after the war steps were taken to form an Icelandic company in the Winnipeg militia unit.

In the workaday world Icelanders gained experience in the skilled trades, and in building construction, which placed them in a position to compete successfully with their fellow citizens and ultimately to build some of the finest residence apartments in the city, while an Icelandic builder, Thorsteinn Borgfjord, as vice-president of the McDiarmid Construction Company, actively supervised the erection of the Legislative Buildings in Winnipeg.

New avenues of employment opened to Icelandic people, and new types of social and economic organizations formed, such as the Icelandic Labor Association, which scored some success in combatting the exploitation of Icelandic laborers in the early nineties. Mr. Jon J. Bildfell, one of the speakers tonight, and prominent over a period of sixty years, was active in the organization.

Also there was a deviation from the typical Icelandic way of doing things, in what were essentially Icelandic institutions. Although an Icelandic Lutheran congregation was formed in 1878, there was no regularly established Icelandic minister till 1884. Meanwhile, a great many of the Icelandic people attended the local English-

speaking churches, notably the Congregational church of Reverend J. B. Silcox, and the Zion Methodist church, and as a result of this contact, certain traditional forms were omitted or altered in the First Lutheran Church services when Reverend Jón Bjarnason came to that Winnipeg congregation in 1884.

It was in Winnipeg that the first Icelandic Unitarian church was formed, 1891, although the missionary who founded it received his inspiration elsewhere. It was in Winnipeg that the NewTheology movement took on organized form, in the Tabernacle Congregation, shortly after the turn of the century.

When New Iceland was founded, 1875, the dream of its founders was an Icelandic colony under the aegis of the federal government. There, the Icelandic language was to be preserved, and the best in Icelandic culture was to thrive. By the irony of fate and despite and because of environment, it was the Icelandic community in Winnipeg, that had its origin in Shanty Town on Hudson's Bay flats, became the cultural centre of the Icelandic settlements in the Province, and, indeed, in North America. This is said with due regard to the splendid literary contributions of men such as Stephan G. Stephansson and Guttormur J. Guttormsson. It is in Winnipeg that **Heimskringla** and **Lögberg** and the **Sameiningin** have been published for over sixty years. It was in Winnipeg that **Heimir** and **Breiðablik**, and **Brautin**, have been published. It is in Winnipeg that the National League has had its headquarters for some

thirty years, and has published its **Tímarit**; that the Icelandic Canadian club was founded, and has published its magazine, which has its readers virtually in all parts of the continent.

It was at Wesley College, in Winnipeg, that Icelandic was taught for over twenty-five years, and it was in Winnipeg that the Jon Bjarnason Academy operated for a quarter of a century, and the movement for the foundation of a Chair in Icelandic Studies originated and received its effective leadership and drive.

The arrival of the small group of Icelandic settlers in 1875 is the first incident of a very important chapter in the story of the Icelandic people in America. It is an early incident, too, in the story of Winnipeg, which was incorporated as a town in 1873, with a population of less than 2,000. The Icelandic community has grown up with the city, and helped to build the foundations.

The arrival of this party and others following, constitutes an event of importance in the story of Winnipeg, because of the contribution made through the years, in the field of learning, medicine, law, and other professions, and in political life. Thomas H. Johnson, Attorney-General in the Norris Government, who attended Winnipeg schools in his youth, made a fine contribution to the public life of the Province.

We commemorate tonight the arrival of the first party of Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg, and we honor them for their courage, and for the pioneering work, to which we owe so much.

Distinguished Visitors from Iceland

It is doubtful if at any time within a period of four months there have been so many distinguished visitors from Iceland among us as we had during the latter part of last summer. No less than five came within that brief space of time: Pálmi Hannesson, Rector of the college (Menntaskólinn) in Reykjavík; Dr. Páll V. G. Kolka from Blönduósi in Húnavatnssýsla in the north part of Iceland; Hannes Kjartansson, the Icelandic Consul General in New York; Helgi Tryggvason, teacher in the Normal School in Reykjavík; and Dr. Alexander Jóhannesson, Rector of the University of Iceland.

This was no accident. It is true that some of the visitors had important assignments in America and two of them were here on invitation, having been invited to attend the seventy-five year anniversary celebrations in Gimli and Winnipeg. But they all took advantage of the opportunity, while on this side of the ocean, to come to Winnipeg and other Icelandic centres, meet the people and see "Vestur-Íslendingar" in action at their affairs in this country. These visits are more than pleasure trips; they are the result of a growing recognition, both in Iceland and here, of the need of such visits and the mutual cultural benefits to be derived from them.

Now that it is assured that the Chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba will be established and there is every reason to believe that it will provide a permanent fountain-head on this side of the waters from which other Icelandic cultural agencies will derive inspiration and sustenance it is well to remind ourselves once more what these agencies are and what

functions they can fulfil and are fulfilling at the present time. When we do so these visits and the cultural purpose behind them can be seen in their proper perspective.

In an editorial in this magazine, in the spring issue of 1949, the five main agencies for the preservation of our Icelandic cultural heritage in America were enumerated and discussed at some length. It is so important to keep them constantly in mind that they may be repeated.

1. The language and literature, which now will have a permanent home in the Chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba.

2. Organizations and institutions in America, thoroughly Icelandic in spirit though both languages may be used, such as The Icelandic National League and its chapters, Icelandic Clubs and Societies, Churches, National Holiday Celebrations, etc.

3. Publications such as weeklies, periodicals and books, in either language.

4. Visits to and from Iceland, this to be a two-way traffic.

5. Access by people in Iceland to our publications and by us to theirs, equally a two-way traffic.

The visits, last summer, of those distinguished guests fall under the fourth heading. Dr. Alexander Jóhannesson made a contribution under the last heading by sending a very informative article on aviation in Iceland which was published in this magazine in the 1949 summer issue. Other articles from Iceland in the same category have been published in the magazine.

Rector Pálmi Hannesson represented the government of Iceland at the anniversary celebration in Gimli. He

not only performed his official duties at the celebration, and with credit, but took time off to travel as far west as the coast and on his journeys and during his brief stay in Winnipeg met a large number of Icelanders and people of Icelandic descent. He caught the transformation that is taking place here but was quick to see that much of permanent value will remain in spite of that change. On his return to Iceland he gave an interview to a reporter from *Tíminn*, a newspaper published in Reykjavík. After referring to the Icelanders of America as men of action and achievement whom nothing can subdue, he gave his interpretation of what he saw here, in these words:

"So also the spirit of the Icelandic cannot be destroyed. Generally speaking it is true that the younger generation does not speak Icelandic except in New Iceland" where many children speak Icelandic and where it is spoken and preserved in many homes. But people are proud of being of Icelandic descent and as long as such is the case there need be no fear that the Icelandic spirit will disappear behind the shadows. But even though the Icelandic language is in retreat the picture of Iceland in the minds of the people is pure and clear. The old people are Icelandic and many a time their thoughts take them back to Iceland."

Dr. Páll Kolka has travelled throughout most of the Icelandic settlements, both in Canada and the United States, and delivered a large number of lectures on Iceland, its history and its people. The first of these lectures was delivered in Gimli and the writer happened to be present. What impressed

him was the emphasis Dr. Kolka placed on the origin of the Icelanders. Two national streams, he said, conjoined on that far-off island and produced the Icelandic people. The one was Norse the other Celtic. To what extent the qualities of value in each has been preserved is not for one of the island to say, but this mixture of two relatively small groups of these two races, which in many ways parallels a similar mixture in the British Isles, though not necessarily of the same proportions, is something all should keep in mind who seek to understand the Icelandic people and interpret their contribution to western culture.

Dr. Kolka, who is a medical practitioner in a small town, is also a historian and a poet. His message brought us closer to Iceland and through his extensive travels he has been able to see Vestur-Íslendingar at close range and judge us as we are.

Hannes Kjartansson is technically not one of the visitors from Iceland as he lives in New York. But he is the Consul General for Iceland and represents Icelandic mercantile corporations in that city and hence remains so deeply rooted in Iceland that he may be considered one of the visitors. He came to Winnipeg to address the gathering held on October 12 last, to commemorate the arrival of the first contingent of Icelanders to Winnipeg. In his address he pointed out the great progress that has been made in Iceland the last few decades and gave a resume of present conditions there.

Helgi Tryggvason, who is a graduate in theology, came to this country to study the educational systems here. While in Winnipeg he managed to find time to see a number of Icelanders and he preached in the First Lutheran church. He brought with him

*Nýja-Ísland is the word commonly used in referring to the district on the west shore of Lake Winnipeg.

motion pictures of scenes in Iceland which he showed when convenient, again helping to bring us clear to Iceland.

Dr. Alexander Jóhannesson is purposely left to the last. That is because his message was so peculiarly timely in that it had a direct bearing on the subject which is uppermost in the minds of most Icelanders in the west, namely, the Chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba. It is most fortunate that one of the foremost students in the world, of the origin of languages, should also be the Rector of the University of Iceland and should bring this message to us. It thus becomes a dual message — a message from an expert who can establish, as no one else can, how fundamental Icelandic is in the evolution of language in the Western World—a message from the Rector of the University of Iceland, in essence an offer to join with the incumbent of the Chair in raising the language to the level at which it should be in the cultural scheme of western civilization.

Dr. Alexander did much more than bring us this two-fold message. He gave expression to his thoughts on the functions of the Chair. They were equally as encouraging as they were timely. They were, in particular, a matter of great satisfaction to us, of the Chair committee, who have during the last two years been travelling throughout the Icelandic settlements seeking contributions for the Chair, and in our requests have on occasions so numerous as almost to become painfully repetitive, set out the functions which we believe the Chair is destined

to fill. In his remarks on the Chair, both publicly and privately, Dr. Jóhannesson referred to almost exactly the same type of educational service. As his thoughts are so close to ours and we of the Committee will on many further occasions have to repeat them before the Chair Fund campaign is over, it is fitting and appropriate to set them out in brief form. They may conveniently be divided into the following main divisions:

- a. Undergraduate study of Icelandic language, literature and history.
- b. Extension Service, particularly in the Icelandic settlements.
- c. The library and museum with appropriate research work.
- d. Post-graduate work in English, Icelandic and Germanics generally.

Dr. Jóhannesson alluded to the second of these divisions in the first interview he gave to reporters when he arrived back in Iceland. The last one he discussed frequently both here in Winnipeg and elsewhere. The educational process which Dr. Jóhannesson visualized on that high level undoubtedly is closest to his heart. That, also, in one of its aspects, will be an extension service and it is in that field that Dr. Jóhannesson sees an opportunity for cooperation with the University of which he is the head.

Icelanders in America, particularly here in Winnipeg, appreciate these visits which have brought us much closer to Iceland. They have fortified us in our determination to establish the Chair in Icelandic and made it the centre of all agencies for the preservation of Icelandic culture on this side of the ocean.

W. J. Lindal

Three Autumn Weeks in Northern Manitoba

ASTA ODDSON

It is something to think about in these modern days that train travel now seems, comparatively speaking, slow. On a good modern highway the high-powered car of to-day travels more miles per hour than most trains, besides this the individual's sense of speed is greater in an automobile. Having travelled more than 8000 miles by car in the last four months, the train trip from Winnipeg to The Pas seemed therefore a bit slow. That however was made up for later.

Starting at 6:30 one morning from The Pas, I flew to Grand Rapids, a flying distance of approximately 150 miles. At a meeting of treaty women there a Homemakers' Club was organized, and we were back by mid-afternoon. These clubs are organized along lines similar to Women's Institutes, being non-sectarian and non-political. In fact originally Women's Institutes were known as Homemakers' Clubs.

Grand Rapids is a settlement situated at the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. As so often happens in The North it is a long settlement; along the shore on both sides of the channel. On one side are the stores and here live the whites and non-treaty Indians; on the other side is the reservation. Grand Rapids can also be reached in the summer months by the S. S. Keenora on its trip back from Norway House. The women here do excellent

bead and silk work and tourists buy their handicrafts which include also some very interesting white hats made with pelican feathers.

The next trip was from The Pas by train (slow again) to Sherridon and by Canadian Northern Airways plane from nearby Cold Lake to Pukatawagon reserve. This is only a distance of about 140 miles almost due north, but the flight is over muskeg, small lakes and spruce covered islands and can only be travelled overland in winter, usually nowadays by bombardier (a glorified snowmobile) or tractor-train. At Pukatawagon (the "w" is pronounced "h") there were only seven white people: the game warden and his wife (the only white woman), their infant son, the Hudson's Bay Company Manager and his clerk and a Roman Catholic Father and Brother. However the game warden's house and the new Hudson's Bay Post were both fully modern, i.e. electric lights, basements with furnaces, a modern bath room and sink with hot and cold running water. Since the Dominion Government provided the natives here with a sawmill there has been a veritable building boom. I visited all the homes here and again organized a Homemakers Club. Father Desormeaux has been here for 24 years and a little Catholic Church is a gem of beauty in the wilderness. Prosperity here seems to have been helped greatly by the system of registered trap lines.

From Pukatawagon we flew, a week later, to South Indian Lake, a little more than 160 miles north and east. This is not an organized reserve as yet but is inhabited by Treaty Indians

Mrs. Oddson, of Winnipeg, is one of three Social Workers appointed last fall to the Indian Affairs branch of the federal government. As Regional Supervisor of Indian Agencies for Manitoba, Mrs. Oddson's duties include care of the aged, guidance of children, organizing Women's clubs for instruction in sewing, canning and sanitation and other homemaking arts —Ed.

from the Nelson House band, some white trappers, mostly married to Indian women, and the Non-Treaty Indian population. There is a 'special' two-room school here with attached four room teacherage built by the Provincial Government. A special school is one where both Treaty and Non-Treaty children attend and the cost is borne by both Governments pro rata.

There is a marvellous spirit of friendliness in this far northern community: Treaty and Non-Treaty people live side by side without friction, Hudson's Bay Company and Independent Traders are on friendly terms, even the Roman Catholic and the Non-Catholic religious groups do not quarrel. Our organization meeting for Homemakers was held in the United church with Father Lavigneur acting as interpreter!

From South Indian a plane took us to Nelson House. This is only a little more than 100 miles and as it is in a southerly direction home seemed much nearer. Here the Assistant Indian Agent is Mr. John Arnfinnson, who, is of Icelandic racial origin and hails from Lundar, Manitoba. He has a fine new fully modern home and has brought in some new ideas which he has developed along original lines. Potatoes and root crops grow quite well in this region and for some time now the Government has encouraged gardening by giving the natives seed and registered seed potatoes. Mr. Arnfinnson has a splendid root cellar built for the community so that the winter freezing of vegetables is no longer a problem. He has also put on a campaign for the canning of meats, wild berries and vegetables. With a canning outfit, women are busy for weeks in the spring, summer and fall. But the interesting thing is his home-made cooler. Here large blocks of ice in in-

sulated compartments keep a storage room cool all summer. Each family that has canned goods has shelves with their names printed clearly to indicate ownership. One person is in charge of the key to this building and no one even thinks of taking things from another shelf. When glasses have been emptied they are washed and put back to save breakages. There is also a smoke house where fish or meat can be smoked.

Nelson House is in fact quite a community. There is a fine nursing station there, a new day school and teacherage, Roman Catholic and Non-Catholic Missions, Hudson's Bay Company and Independent Trader Posts and a game warden. The health nurse who visits the Indians in their homes' is provided with a 25 h.p. motor launch. This is however a scattered community: there is the Roman Catholic Mission Point, Dog Point, Poplar Point (central, here are the stores and homes of the white population and the day school and nursing station), a Toan which is a series of headlands with from 5-8 families on each. Everyone here, except the very aged, has a motor boat. As I visited the homes the women proudly showed me their new cook stoves, modern beds complete with mattresses and springs, linoleums on the floors and the occasional hand-power washing machine.

Since the Federal Government policy of building day schools a very necessary improvement in housing on the reserves is taking place. One function of the Homemaker Clubs is to help the women make these new houses into clean and attractive homes. Demonstrations will be given at meetings to teach modern methods of cooking, sewing and child care, and furthermore to revive the many ancient handicrafts of the Indian women.

As we flew back with Eric Taylor from Nelson House to Waboden, about 100 miles South again over a bleak landscape of muskeg, small lakes and spruce covered islands, it came to me that a great deal of credit for open-

ing up the Northland belongs to these "bush-pilots", who fly day after day sometimes when the ceiling is zero, landing in coves and inlets along rocky shore-lines towards piers scarcely adequate for small boats.

LEAVES FOR ENGLAND FOR FURTHER STUDY

Dr. Harold Blondal, who for the past year has been doing Post Graduate work at Chalk River, Ont., has been awarded a Fellowship from the National Cancer Institute of Canada to carry on further study in research at the Royal Cancer Hospital in London, England, for at least a year before returning to Winnipeg.

Harold is the son of Mrs. Gudrun Blondal and the late Dr. Agust Blondal of Winnipeg.

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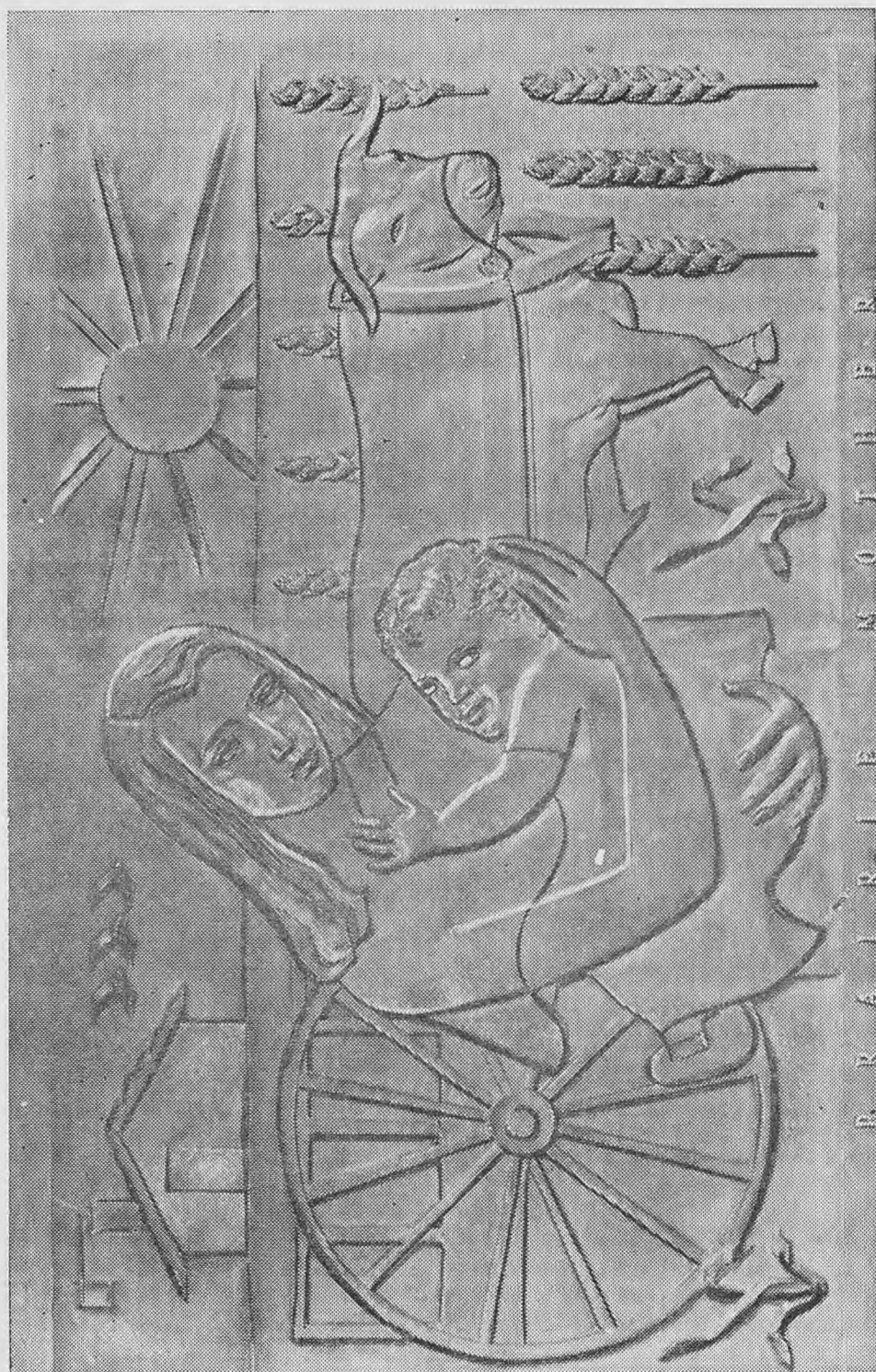
UNIVERSITY "FRESHIE QUEEN"

Among the nine candidates picked by the various faculties of the University of Manitoba to compete for the annual title of 'Freshie' Queen were three girls of Icelandic descent. They are Shirley Thorkelson, of science, daughter of Karl B. Thorkelson, school inspector at Virden, Man., and Mrs. Thorkelson; Dorothy Kristjanson, of United College, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Wilhelm Kristjanson; and Ruth Thorvaldson, in the Arts department daughter of Mr. and Mrs. G. S. Thorvaldson. Mr. Thorvaldson a Winnipeg lawyer and former Manitoba M.L.A. is the son of the late Sveinn Thorvaldson of Riverton.

Ruth became the successful candidate and was duly crowned Freshie Queen.



Ruth Thorvaldson



Bronze Plaque By Winnipeg Artist

Miss Carol Feldsted, Winnipeg-born artist has made a raised bronze memorial plaque, dedicated to "The Prairie Mothers who, pioneering in a hard land, have left us a noble heritage of their steadfastness."

The plaque, which is creating favorable comment in Canadian art circles, was ordered by a group of Swift Current, Sask., business men who are trustees for the late Charles Thoreson, a pioneer Norwegian-born resident of that area. It portrays, in bronze relief, a young pioneer prairie mother, with her child in her arms, as the central theme.

In the background is a Red River cart, to which is yoked a great stolid ox. A crude prairie homestead shack stands further back, beyond this group, and a meagre crop of wheat plants and grasses are scattered in the foreground, while in the east the glorious sun is rising, symbolizing new and better days ahead.

The plaque, simply and effectively entitled, "Prairie Mother", will be placed prominently in the new Museum and Library wing of Swift Current Collegiate, as a reminder to the youth of that district of the heroic struggle of the pioneers who bequeathed to them a dearly bought heritage.

The Thoreson trustees, at their own expense, commissioned Miss Feldsted to make a bronze relief plaque of Mr. Thoreson, the donor of the Library building, setting out that he was "long a faithful servant of this city". This second plaque will be hung on an outside wall.

Miss Feldsted, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Feldsted of Winnipeg, is a graduate of the University of Manitoba and has taken post graduate work in art in New York and Chicago, receiving her Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Chicago, having won among other prizes, the Snyder Scholarship at the Chicago Arts Institute.

She is a member of the faculty of Architecture and Interior Design of the University of Manitoba. Miss Feldsted's new book, "Design Fundamentals", published by the Pitman Press, New York, is just off the press and its material is study basis for some lectures in her faculty.

Miss Feldsted is at present on leave of absence from the University while taking post-graduate studies at the University of California. (See news item with picture in Icel. Can., June, 1943.)

DR. E. JOHNSON HEADS MANITOBA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Dr. Eyolfur Johnson, of Selkirk, Man., was elected president, by acclamation of the Manitoba Medical Association at the three-day convention of the association held early in October at the Royal Alexandra hotel.

Dr. Johnson, who graduated in Medicine from the University of Manitoba,

was born at Selkirk. His parents, Jon and Guðlaug Maria (Sigfúsdóttir) Johnson both came from Norður-Múlasýslu, Iceland.

In 1941 Dr. Johnson was married to Thorey Stefania, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Hinrikson of Selkirk. He is practising physician at the Selkirk General Hospital.

Gudrun Borgford Pesnicak Tells About Her Two Years in Japan

It was interesting to interview Mrs. Gudrun Pesnicak, a daughter of Thorsteinn Borgford and the late Mrs. Borgford, who was visiting in Winnipeg this spring at the home of her brother and sister-in-law, Professor and Mrs. Skapti J. Borgford, with her husband, Major Charles A. Pesnicak and their five children, after a two-year stay in Japan. Major Pesnicak served with the American army during the war and has now returned from service with the American occupation forces in Japan. They were on their way home to the United States and are now living in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Pesnicak family lived Western style at Army headquarters at Gifu, in Japan, and so their living conditions were not governed by the Japanese mode of existence which would inevitably have involved drastic changes for them. But Mrs. Pesnicak could tell of quite a number of interesting experiences acquired through her contacts with the people of Japan.

"Our first impressions were, naturally not too happy", she says, "we felt very much that we were foreigners in an alien country. At the railroad station Japs were milling about in large numbers going to and from trains. The heavy odor of not-too-fresh fish greeted us, and this turned out to be a frequent experience during our stay.

"Looking down a narrow road in a town or city, one would see along both sides, rows of unpainted farm buildings weathered to a greyish-black color. Along the dirt road is a little stream about a foot wide, which serves the residents' needs in a variety of ways. Here you might see a person washing vegetables, and a little further on someone would be washing clothes in the same stream, and beyond that

one spots a group of youngsters wading in it.

"We found the Japanese people very friendly and hospitable. On visiting a home your host will greet you courteously and, bowing very low, will invite you to enter. But first you must take off your shoes and you are given scuff-like house slippers to wear, or lacking those, you go in your stockings, after which you are motioned to sit on the floor beside a low table. There is always an interpreter present, either one that you have brought along, or else one who speaks for your host.

"A cup of green tea, —clear— is offered to the guests. Sugar being scarce, is not offered, neither is milk or cream. There may be a cow on the island of Honshu but I never saw one during my two years' stay. Most of the cattle are on the northern island of Hokkaido. Mothers nurse their children until they are two or three years old.

At another home you are treated to a warm rice wine, called saki, in thimble sized cups. They keep filling them up, so if you do not wish for any more just let a full one sit in front of you.

Rice, being the staple food, is prepared in a variety of ways, and Sukiyaki is a dish something like stew and, for us, was one of the nicest tasting of Japanese dishes.

With a group of occupationaires I visited the Pearl Farm operated by M. Kinoto. On this trip it was necessary to spend a night at a Japanese hotel. This was very different from staying at an hotel in our country. In the first place, it was necessary for us when staying away from the army post, to take along our own food and drinking water. So we had picnic meals at the

hotel. The floors are covered with straw mats and bedding is brought in at night, but no beds!

When we inquired about bathing facilities, we were amiably taken down to investigate the matter. The ritual consisted of first having a cold shower, washing with soap and then rinsing it off. Then you should step into a square wooden bath tub, containing water as hot as you could stand. But, for goodness' sake don't be found guilty of pulling out the plug as others will be using the same water after you have finished! So we settled for a wash at the sink!

At the pearl farm the divers put on an exhibition for the benefit of our group and the other tourists who come there every day during the summer months.

We marvelled at the liveness and skill of the girl divers who skim down into the water for their basket of oysters. Then we watched with keen interest the girl who adroitly inserted the bead under the oyster's shell without endangering its life. Records are kept as to the size and number of beads inserted, so that even the size of each pearl to be produced by this operation can be estimated fairly accurately. The baskets are then all labelled and lowered into the water once more, where they will remain for at least five years, or until the pearl is fully developed.

On the city streets you find every type of western dress, and also men and women in their kimonos. On a rainy day you might think in amazement that a small self-propelled haystack was coming down the road, but it is merely a Jap in his straw raincoat, pedaling his bicycle. Another cyclist pedaling along in his gaita's — (wooden shoes), and one hand on the handle-bar, keeps off the rain by hold-

ing an umbrella very erect in the other hand, and totes a large load, securely fastened to the rear fender.

Electric lights are seen everywhere in the country, but electricity is rationed so its use is meager. Rice and charcoal were also rationed. Wood is mostly cut on the mountain sides by special orders, and at a distance the mountains look as if a razor had divided them into strips of yellow and green.

Potatoes are cut a little thicker than potato chips and laid in the sun to dry for future use. The wheat, which is grown in the winter, is harvested all by hand. Then rice is grown in the same field in the summer time. The Japanese have to be thrifty and they have to tend carefully their tiny piece of ground. From remote ages they have understood how to preserve the soil from exhaustion by using manure. The manure par excellence has been and still is human excrement. Perhaps we think it is terrible to use this for fertilizer. But the Japanese probably would think we were 'nuts', when going to a modern store and buying a neatly wrapped package of commercial fertilizer to take home for our soil.

Papan is a picturesque country with its mountains looming in the background everywhere you travel. The Japs are artistic in their ways and like to paint pictures. They are neat and orderly in their work and skilful at their tasks. All the girls can sew."

It was a very interesting experience to live in Japan, says Mrs. Pesnicak. The children enjoyed it, but they mixed mostly with American children at the Army post and only learned a few words of Japanese.

But Mrs. Pesnicak admitted that it was nice to be back home once more.

H. D.

Thorvaldur Johnson Ph.D. (F.R.S.C., CAN.)



Dr. Thorvaldur Johnson

One of the foremost of the many Canadians of Icelandic descent who have gained recognition, and risen to prominence in the world of science is Dr. Thorvaldur Johnson, Winnipeg, Plant Pathologist (cereal rusts) at the Dominion Laboratory of Plant Pathology at Fort Garry.

In spite of the fact that Dr. Johnson has been widely acclaimed and has been accorded a high place among his fellow scientists in his field of plant pathology his accomplishments in rust research are little known to the general Icelandic Canadian public, for he is a man of extreme modesty — in Churchill's phraseology — without having much to be modest about. He is a man who prefers to let his accomplishments speak for themselves without seeking personal publicity or fame.

Dr. Johnson was born on a pioneer's farm near Arnes, Manitoba, just before the turn of the century. He is the son of the late Sigurjon Johnson and

his wife Gudrun, who is a sister of Dr. Thorbergur Thorvaldson, Saskatoon, and the late Sveinn Thorvaldson, Riverton. Mrs. Johnson still resides at the family home at Arnes.

After finishing his public school education at Arnes, Thorvaldur entered Wesley College, Winnipeg, (1914-1915) and later completed his High School studies at Saskatoon. He also completed a teacher training course at Saskatoon Normal School and subsequently taught in Saskatchewan schools for three summers during his years of University studies in Saskatoon.

During the First World War he was a member of the Royal Air Force. Upon his discharge in 1919 he entered the Faculty of Science at the University of Saskatchewan, where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1922, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture in 1924.

In the summer of 1923 Dr. Johnson embarked upon his present career of plant research with the Dominion Government Department of Agriculture. The following summer he accepted the appointment of Plant Disease Survey Inspector for the State of Minnesota, and that fall entered the Graduate School of the University of Minn., where he received his Master of Science Degree in 1925. Shortly thereafter he was appointed Assistant Plant Pathologist at the Dominion Laboratory at Fort Garry, where he has been in charge of research projects on Plant Rusts. Presently his official title at the Rust Research Branch is Plant Pathologist (cereal rusts).

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy was conferred upon Dr. Johnson by the University of Minnesota in 1930.

for outstanding research work on wheat rusts. He was also engaged in research work for some time at The Kew Botanical Gardens near London, England.

Dr. Johnson is a charter member of the Phytopathological Society of Canada and has filled all major executive positions of that organization with distinction, being its secretary treasurer for four years, later Councillor, Vice-President, and President. He is also a member of The Agricultural Institute of Canada; The American Phytopathological Society, and The American Association for Advancement of Science. He is also a member of Associated Committees of Plant Diseases and Breeding, of the National Research Council and the Dominion Department of Agriculture.

The latest honor conferred upon Dr. Johnson this year was that of being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a singular honor accorded only to a few men of foremost distinction in their respective fields of endeavor.

Dr. Johnson has found time to prepare for publication a very large number of scientific papers, relating particularly to the rust disease of cereals, and has accepted many invitations to lecture on his research findings to his colleagues in the United States, who highly laud his accomplishment. One eminent fellow scientist writes of Dr. Johnson: "He is considered an international authority on the genetics of

rust fungi." Another refers to him as: "The most eminent worker in Canada and one of the most outstanding workers on the continent on the physiological races of stem rusts and on genetic studies on the stem rust fungus."

Dr. Johnson's accomplishments in scientific research substantiate the fact that he has been a hard worker all his life, but in his work he has found not only success but continuous enjoyment so that every new project has not become a task but an adventure.

In the company of his personal friends he retains his mantle of modesty and composure. He has however been endowed with a keen sense of humor and is a good conversationalist on many and varied topics outside of his professional scientific interests. His principal hobbies are reading, art, music and gardening. Besides reading extensively within his own field he is an avid reader of good fiction, biography and poetry and for his own diversion and entertainment has written some verse. He has a fine sense of appreciation for both art and music and has acquired a fine collection of recorded classical music. Comparatively recently he has embarked on a new hobby—gardening, and has become somewhat of an amateur authority on the growth and culture of the Iris.

Dr. Johnson is married to the former Rannveig Arnason, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Steindor Arnason, formerly residing at Vidir, Man. J. K. L.

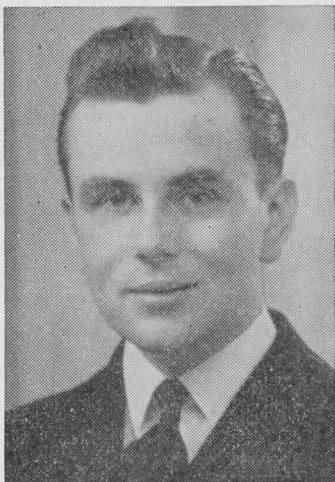
PAUL BARDAL HONORED

Paul Bardal, M. L. A. who retired this fall as choir leader of the First Lutheran church choirs after more than thirty years of service (see *Icel. Canadian*, Spring, 1949), was honored at a special service held in the church Sunday, Nov. 19. In behalf of the church Council and congregation Mr.

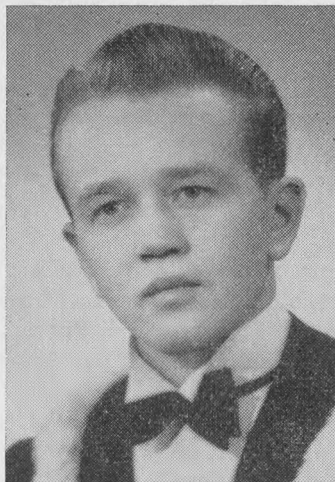
V. Jonasson, president, presented Mr. Bardal with a large hand-illuminated scroll, suitably inscribed, in recognition of his long and faithful service to the church.

Earlier this fall the senior and junior choirs held a joint party in honor of their retiring choirmaster, where he was presented with a handsome gift.

WAR SERVICE RECORD



J. E. B. Thorsteinson



O. R. "Bud" Thorsteinson

JOHN EDWIN BJARNI THORSTEINSON—Born in Winnipeg, Man., July 14, 1924. Served with the R.C.N.V.R. during World War II. Is still active as 1st Lieut. in the reserve force at H.M.C.S. Chippawa, while studying electrical engineering at the University of Manitoba.

ORVILLE ROY "BUD" THORSTEINSON—Born at Winnipeg, Man., Nov. 27, 1925. Served with the R.C.N.V.R. during World War II. Graduated from University of Manitoba in Civil Engineering 1950.

SONS OF MR. & MRS. J. B. THORSTEINSON, NORWOOD, MAN.
Grandsons of the late Bjarni and Bjorg Thorsteinson, Selkirk, Man.



Sgt. S. S. Thorlakson

SGT. S. S. THORLAKSON

Enlisted in Winnipeg as Wireless Operator with the R.C.A.F. and trained in Montreal. Went overseas 1940 and was attached to the R.A.F. at Upper Hayford, England. Returned to Canada, March 1943, to become instructor in Morse Code in Telegraphy at No. 3 Wireless school, Winnipeg, Man. Later was an operator at the Air Observer school at Portage La Prairie, Man. Discharged 1945.

Son of Magnus Thorlakson, Westman Islands, Iceland, and Monoca Einarsdottir Thorlakson, West Hill, Ontario.

**L.A.C. Hallgrimur Johnson****Sgt. Johann Baldur Johnson****Sgt. John Herman Johnson**

L.A.C. HALLGRIMUR JOHNSON—Born at Kandahar, Sask., May 24, 1919. Enlisted in R.C.A.F., 424 Squadron April 1942. Served in England and North Africa.

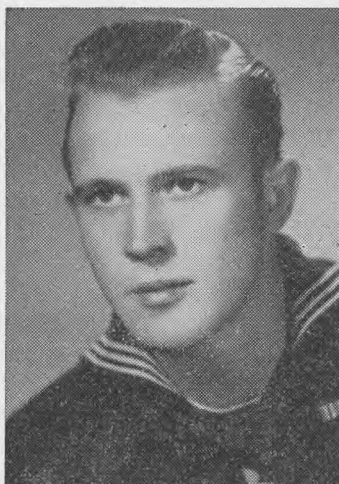
SGT. JOHANN BALDUR JOHNSON—Born at Kandahar, Sask., Dec. 15, 1915. Enlisted in R.C.A.F. July 1941.

SGT. JOHN HERMAN JOHNSON—Born at Kandahar, Sask., August 23, 1914. Enlisted in the R.C.A.F. November 1941.

Sons of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Johnson, Kandahar, Sask.

**LEADING WRITER ALBERT N. LOVATT—**

Born Dec. 27, 1912 at Edmonton, Alta. Enlisted in R.C.N. Feb. 21, 1944 aboard H.M.C.S. "Nonsuch", Edmonton. Served on H.M.C.S. "York", "Cornwallis", Stadacona", "Scotian". Discharged April 18, 1946. Son of Freda (Johnson) and Norman Lovatt, Edmonton, Alta.

**E.M.3/c GEORGE JAMES S. ANTILL—**

Born in Vancouver, B. C., Aug. 14, 1925. Enlisted in U.S. Navy Sept. 22, 1943. Served in the South Pacific 2½ years. Was presented with 3 battle stars, the Victory medal, and South Pacific medal. Discharged May 1946. Son of Birdie (Feldsted) and George Antill, Hollywood, Calif.

Book Reviews

History of Icelandic Prose Writers 1800–1940, by Stefan Einarsson, 269 pp., Ithaca, New York, 1948. (Islandica, Vols. XXXII-XXXIII)

History of Icelandic Poets, 1800–1940, by Richard Beck, 247 pp., Ithaca, New York, 1950 (Islandica, Vol. XXXIV)

The publication of Professor Richard Beck's History of the Icelandic poets completes an ambitious project first conceived by Professor Stefan Einarsson some twenty years ago. At that time Einarsson enlisted the support of his colleague Richard Beck who agreed to write on the poets while Einarsson was to deal with the prose writers.

As a result of this collaboration we now have for the first time in English a concise and authoritative work of reference on Icelandic literature since 1800.

Numerous reviews of both volumes have already appeared both here and in Iceland although an exhaustive criticism of Beck's work is, to my knowledge, yet to come. In Einarsson's case this is not so. Steingrímur J. Þorsteinsson, in a long and learned appraisal (Skírnir CXXXII, (1948)) has assessed the book from a scholar's viewpoint and has tracked down with laudable diligence a fairly large number of minor errors that have apparently crept into its pages. This is not surprising in view of the great mass of statistical data assembled in this fine work.

The general reader will find the book highly informative and very well written in spite of a few poorly constructed sentences that have escaped the proofreader. In rare cases the thought expressed seems at variance

with the meaning intended (e.g. p. 229, lines 10–12). These shortcomings, however, are too trivial to constitute a fault in a book that is otherwise written in simple, forceful and unaffected prose. The above remarks, in so far as they refer to the quality of the writing, apply with even greater force to professor Beck's volume which is marked by a fine rhythmic style. Whether or not the experts will find many errors in his book remains to be seen.

Two sections in these volumes are of special interest to North American readers. These are the chapters on Icelandic literature since 1930 or thereabout and those dealing with the Icelandic writers on this continent.

It is unfortunately true that we are woefully ignorant of modern Icelandic literature and the very comprehensive treatment given to the younger writers in both these volumes will be invaluable to those who more or less lost touch with Icelandic literature with the passing of such old time favorites as Einar H. Kvaran, Matthías Jochumsson and Einar Benediktsson. Of the modern writers only two are at all well known here, namely Halldór K. Laxness and Davíð Stefánsson. The towering figure of Halldór K. Laxness has dominated the literary scene in Iceland for the last twenty years and is well known in this country. Two things, however, have made it difficult for our people to recognize fully his supreme artistry, i.e. his political philosophy and his unflattering portrayal of the Iceland that we knew, or thought we knew. With Davíð Stefánsson the reverse is true and he is still an object of adulation among those who remember his earlier poems. This is understandable. His is the only major voice still heard that our older people recognize as truly Icelandic. The modern Iceland of town-dwellers

is not the Iceland of the farmer emigrant of fifty years ago.

Coming to the American-Icelandic chapter we find that professor Einarsson has devoted some twenty-two pages to a discussion of eleven prose-writers while many others are mentioned in passing. This chapter is very good as far as it goes, but a number of our best prose-writers have been left out. The reason is partly that Einarsson includes only those who have had their work published in book form. This is unfortunate for many of our ablest writers have only written for the public prints and then often on controversial topics of merely local interest. Most of this output has of course no permanent value and it is not suggested that it should be classed as literature. We have nevertheless had some writers whose fine style has given a distinct literary flavour to all their work. One of these was the late Mr. Justice Hjalmar A. Bergman who in his day wrote numerous articles mostly for the Icelandic weekly *Lögberg* and did indeed publish a book, "*Saga Heimferðarmálsins*". This book, though controversial and partisan in tone, is written with striking vigor and marked by clarity of thought and expression all too seldom found in American-Icelandic prose-writers. Another writer of note is the Reverend Guttormur Guttormsson. He is a clear thinker and one of the very few men now left on this continent that can write good Icelandic prose. A third is Dr. Sigurður J. Johannesson. This prolific writer and fine literary craftsman is not even mentioned, except as the founder of the *Hagyrðingafélag*, yet he is far more important as a prose-writer than as a poet. It is only fair to note that prof. Beck has largely rectified this omission by his very fair and

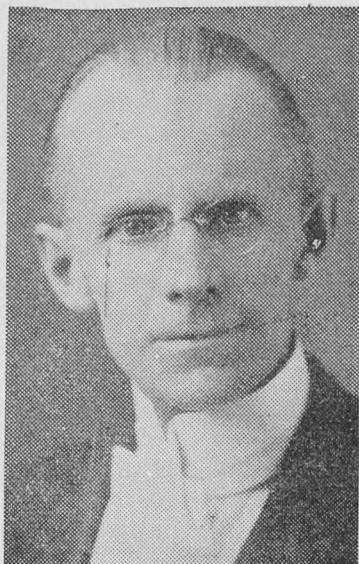
sympathetic appraisal of this great reformer and enthusiast.

In a chapter of some forty pages, professor Beck gives a very good account of the American-Icelandic poets. Some thirty-six of these are mentioned and the author's estimate of their talents and relative importance is generally sound, but in view of the large number of minor poets listed it would not have been out of place to include a few more to complete the canvas. Three of these may be briefly mentioned: Hallur E. Magnusson is a clever satirist. His small book of poems, *Lykkjuföll*, published in Winnipeg some thirty years ago, contains among other humorous pieces a rollicking ballad known as the "*Lundarbragur*". Choice parts of this poem are still sung or recited in the Lundar district on festive occasions. Ludvik Kristjansson, next to K. N. our best humorist, undoubtedly deserves mention. Many of his quatrains are excellent and his longer poems, though uneven in quality, seldom fail to entertain. Ragnar Stefansson has not many published poems to his credit but those that have appeared are wrought with great skill and reveal strong poetic feeling. He is among the best of our present day poets.

Professor Beck's treatment of our two major poets is excellent, especially in the case of Stephan G. Stephansson. Guttormur J. Guttormsson is justly praised for such striking and original poems as *Bíflugnaræktin*, long a favorite of the critics, and receives space commensurate with his pre-eminence among American-Icelandic poets of today.

These scholarly volumes will be found indispensable by those wishing to study modern Icelandic literature and the general reader will find them entertaining and informative. —H. Th.

Icelandic Canadian Club Honors Prof. S. K. Hall



Prof. S. K. Hall

In recognition of his fine contribution, in the field of music, to the Icelandic community and to this country as a whole, Steingrímur S. Hall, Bac. Muc., was elected honorary life member of the Icelandic Canadian club at a concert held in his honor at the I.O.G.T. hall, Nov. 26.

At the invitation of the club, Mr. and Mrs. Hall came from their home at Wynyard, Sask., for the occasion and were enthusiastically welcomed by about 350 friends, whose spontaneous burst of applause as the guests of honor entered the hall signified unmistakably their genuine love and esteem for Mr. and Mrs. Hall.

Featured on the programme were a number of Mr. Hall's compositions for solo voice sung by Mrs. Pearl Johnson, soprano, and Elmer Nordal, baritone, accompanied by Miss Sigrid Bardal. Mrs. Johnson sang: 'I Remember';

'The Birch Tree'; and 'On Wings of Song', using the English texts, while Mr. Nordal rendered in Icelandic, 'Þótt þú langförull legðir' (The Pioneer's Song), and 'Ríðum, ríðum', (Ride, Ride), and 'Farewell', in English.

Mr. Paul Bardal, M.L.A., gave a short address, paying tribute to both Mr. and Mrs. Hall for their contribution in the sphere of music. Recalling Mr. Hall's work as teacher, organist, choir master and band master, Mr. Bardal said: "But it is his work as composer which will be cherished by coming generations who will thrill to the delightful songs he has given us, as we have done for these many years." Of Mrs. Hall, who was an outstanding soprano soloist in Winnipeg for many years, he said: "In our Icelandic community she will be remembered as one of the loveliest singers of all time."

Mr. Bardal read a message from the Council and congregation of the First Lutheran Church, where Mrs. Hall was soloist and where Mr. Hall was organists for thirty years and choir master for eighteen years. This letter, signed by the president of the Church Council, Mr. Victor Jonasson, says in part:

"The Church Council and congregation of the First Lutheran Church wish to extend their greetings and congratulations to you on this happy occasion. We commend the Icelandic Canadian Club for sponsoring this effort in paying you a deserved tribute. Your contribution to the field of music has brought credit to the Icelandic people, and enhanced our reputation as an ethnic group in this hemisphere."

Mr. Wilhelm Kristjanson, president of the Club, was in the chair and presented Mr. Hall with a framed, hand

illuminated certificate of membership. Mrs. Hall was presented with a corsage by Miss Mattie Halldorson, the club's secretary.

Mr. and Mrs. Hall both spoke briefly, and voiced their thanks and appreciation to the club, to those who took part in the programme, and to all those present for the warm welcome displayed by this large gathering. "I am happy and proud to become a member of the Icelandic Canadian Club", said Mr. Hall, "and deeply moved by the honor you have conferred upon me. I know, and I think we all know, of the noble work the Icelandic Canadian Club is doing in perpetuating the worth while literature and traditions of Iceland, and in bringing, to the younger generation especially, an understanding and appreciation of that cherished culture. May your fine work continue and prosper for a long, long time, for I feel sure that through it we will achieve the salvation, in this country, of Iceland's culture, traditions and art."

Following the programme, the club's Social Committee, under the convenership of Mrs. Runa Jonasson, served lunch, and Mr. and Mrs. Hall's many friends had an opportunity to greet them personally and chat for a few minutes. But their visit to Winnipeg was of necessity, all too brief as Mr. Hall has a large class of piano pupils in Wynyard, who are now preparing for the University of Saskatchewan spring exams.

Mr. Hall, who has been teaching piano and theory for fifty-four years, was born at Gimli, Manitoba, Nov. 16, 1877. His parents who came from Píngeyjarsýsla, in northern Iceland, were Jónas and Sigríður Hall. The family later moved to Gardar, North Dakota.

Mr. Hall graduated in 1899 from

Gustavus Adolphus Conservatory of Music, St. Peter, Minn., with the highest honors, receiving the degree of Bachelor of Music. The following



Mrs. S. K. Hall

year he took post-graduate courses in Minneapolis and at the Chicago Musical College. He has held a number of important appointments, including: — membership on the faculty of Gustavus Adolphus Conservatory as teacher of piano and pipe organ, 1902-1905; organist and choir master at the First Lutheran church, Winnipeg; teacher in the piano department of St. John's College, Winnipeg for two years, and member of the faculty of the Imperial Academy of Music for three years. He has been a member of the Manitoba Music Teachers' Association since it was organized and is a member of the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers. His pupils have passed examinations in all grades of the Toronto Conservatory of Music, many of them with highest honors.

As a performer and piano teacher, Mr. Hall has received high praise, but

to us he is best known as a composer of high calibre. He has to his credit a large number of original compositions: solos, choruses and organ music. Some of these have been repeatedly performed in concerts and on the radio by leading artists both in Canada and the United States. They have received the plaudits of the press and Public, and are well known and beloved by people of Icelandic descent all over this continent. His two published volumes of songs, "Icelandic Song Miniatures", and "Songs of Iceland", with English and Icelandic texts, contain many musical gems, which reveal a fine lyric sense and high inspiration. Some of these have especially expressive accompaniments which greatly highlight the emotional impact of the songs and create a profound atmosphere of depth and harmony. Among these may be mentioned, "The Birch Tree", which, artistically and musically, may be considered one of his finest creations.

Mr. Hall was married in 1904 to Sigríður Anna Hördal, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Jón Hördal. They have two daughters, Norma Evelyn, wife of G. C. Manning, Washington, D. C., and Sylvia, Mrs. William Einarson of Los Angeles, California.

Mrs. Hall started singing in the First Lutheran Church choir at the age of thirteen, and being urged by her friends, she took some vocal training with local teachers and later studied in Minneapolis and New York. Then she returned to Winnipeg, and for three decades she gave delight to her audiences with her voice "of singularly beautiful quality, guided by an artistic temperament", as Paul Bardal put it.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Hall seem to have that valuable zest for creative effort which keeps people spiritually young. Mr. Hall is still an enthusiastic instructor of aspiring music students and has not given up composing music. Mrs. Hall's creative and artistic talents are expressed in the lovely flower garden at their home in Wynyard, which, regardless of the unrewarding climate, blossoms forth as if by magic under her expert care.

The Icelandic Canadian club welcomes its new member, and feels that his support and Mrs. Hall's will be a valuable asset to the club's activities, as their attitude toward worthwhile cultural activities is both positive and constructive.

H. D.

THE ICELANDIC CANADIAN

EDITORIAL BOARD: Holmfríður Danielson, Chairman, 869 Garfield St., Winnipeg, Can.; Judge W. J. Lindal, 788 Wolseley Ave.; Heimir Thorgrímson, 627 Agnes St.; Halldor J. Stefánsson, 296 Baltimore Rd., and Jon K. Laxdal, 39 Home St.

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IN THE NEWS

SUCCESSFUL IN UNITED STATES ELECTIONS



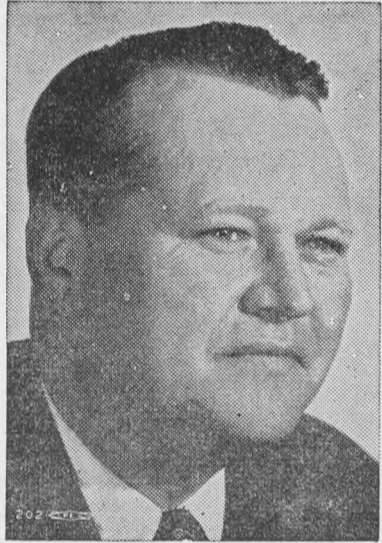
Judge Gudmundur Grimson, of Bismark, N. D., was returned without opposition for a ten-year term as Justice of the Supreme Court of North Dakota. (See Icel. Canadian, Winter issue, 1949).

★

A very young and promising lawyer, **E. T. Christianson** of Cavalier was elected to the office of Attorney General of North Dakota.

★

Also elected were: **G. T. Christianson**, County Commissioner in Mc. Henry County; **F. Snowfield**, Cavalier, Prosecutor for Pembina County; **William J. Sturlaugson**, County Auditor, Pembina County; **John H. Axdal**, County Treasurer, for the third time; and **Sam Samuelson**, Sheriff for the second time.



Valdimar Bjornson, of Minneapolis, Minn., was elected to the office of State Treasurer for the state of Minnesota. Valdimar is well known in news paper and radio work. He is the son of Gunnar Bjornson of Minneapolis and the late Mrs. Bjornson. (See Icel. Can. Winter, 1949).

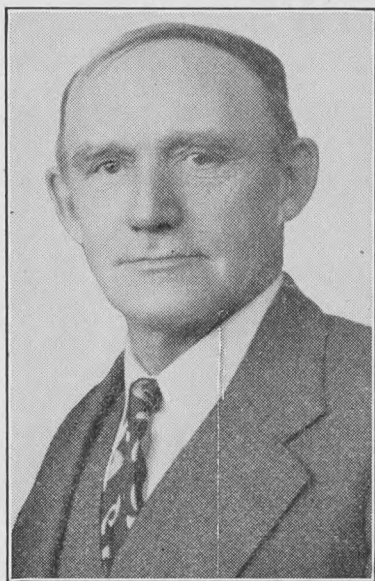
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NEWLY ELECTED MAYOR OF SELKIRK

Stefan Oliver is the new Mayor of Selkirk, Man. He served on the Council for 8 years. He is the son of Gudmundur and Thora Oliver who at one time farmed west of Arborg, Man., but have resided at Selkirk for a number of years. Mayor Oliver went in without opposition.

★

At the annual meeting of the Manitoba Diploma Music group, Margaret McKeen was elected president. (See Icel. Canadian, June issue). And Thora Asgeirson was elected corresponding secretary.



Freeman M. Einarson, of Mountain, N. D., was re-elected to the North Dakota State Legislature.

★

WINS SHINING NEW CHARIOT



Leo Johnson, comes to the fore again. He skipped his rink to victory in the Associated Travellers Automobile Bonspiel at Edmonton on Nov. 5th. Leo and the three other members of his rink drove home in the shining new cars which they won at the Bon-

spiel. Being the winner is, of course, nothing new for Leo, he has repeatedly shown his prowess in curling. In the year 1934 he won the Canadian Championship, and brought back to Manitoba the MacDonald-Briar Trophy, and he has won three times the Championship of Manitoba. Leo is the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Gudjon Johnson of Winnipeg.

★

Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson, has recently returned from Cleveland, Ohio, where he was one of the principal speakers, at the Annual Convention of American Surgeons.

★

MISS AXFORD HONORED

Miss Sibba Axford was one of two St. Paul (Minn.) nurses, with 27 years of service to the tuberculoses cause to be honored at the annual dinner of the Minnesota Public Health association, at the University of Minnesota, in October.

Miss Axford was chief nurse at Mineral Springs sanatorium in Cannon Falls from 1924 to 1948 and is now supervisor at St. Luke's hospital, St. Paul. (See Icel. Canadian, Summer 1948).

★

MANITOBA SCHOLARSHIPS (Outside Greater Winnipeg)

Andrea Kathleen Sigurjonsson, was awarded the Manitoba (Rural) Scholarship of \$300.00. She is attending United College this year.

Andrea Kathleen is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. Sigurjonsson, Principal of the school of Gimli, Man., and the granddaughter of Mrs. Hildur Sigurjonsson, and the late Sigurbjorn Sigurjonsson, of Winnipeg.

SERMONS BY DR. R. MARTEINSSON PUBLISHED

In honor of his fifty years of service in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, as an ordained minister, a few of **Dr. R. Marteinsson's** friends published a group of five short sermons delivered by him at various meetings of the Convention of the Synod held in the Argyle district in 1949.

This is a small brochure of twenty pages with the title, "**Guð í Hjarta**", (God in the Heart), the first sermon having the same title. Three of these are in the Icelandic language and two in English, and contain many devout and thoughtful meditations. The titles are, besides the first sermon: Love in Deed; **Guð í fegurðinni** (God in Beauty); Rejoice and Remember; **Hin mikla þörf á krafti Guðs í freistingum** (The Great need for God's Power in Temptation). The texts taken from the Bible are rich in exhortation and remind us to: "Protect your heart above all things for there is the fountain of life; Let us not live in words, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; Give heed to the lilies of the field; and Lead us not into temptation."

In the foreword, Rev. Skuli Sigurgeirson pays tribute to the long service of Dr. and Mrs. Marteinsson, and the brochure has a full page picture of them. Last year Dr. and Mrs. Marteinsson celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary, and on November 26, this year, Dr. Marteinsson reached his eightieth birthday.

★

CITY PRESS GROUP HONORS JUDGE LINDAL AND BRIDE

Presentation of a table lamp to Judge and Mrs. W. J. Lindal in honor of their recent wedding was made Oct.

12, at a dinner-reception held by the Canada Press Club at Roslyn Gables, Winnipeg.

Hon. R. F. McWilliams, lieutenant-governor, made the presentation on behalf of the club. Congratulatory messages to the couple were delivered by representatives of various newspapers who have membership in the club.

Chairman at the dinner was Justice J. B. Coyne, of the Manitoba court of appeal.

Judge Lindal was largely instrumental in organizing the Canada Press club, eight years ago, for the purpose of creating unity and understanding among the various ethnic groups in the city. It is composed of representatives from various foreign language newspapers in Winnipeg, many of whom have now adopted a policy of publishing at least part of their paper in the English language. Also represented in the Canada Press club, which is a very interesting discussion group, interspersed with delightful social functions, are the English Press in this city; The Icelandic Canadian Magazine; The Author's Association; and the Canadian Unity Council.

Mrs. Lindal was formerly Miss Gwen Magnusson, a school teacher in the city.

★

GRADUATES

Helen Bjorg Thorsteinsson graduated from High School at St. Mary's Academy in 1944 and received degree of Bachelor of Arts from United College in 1948. Her brother Orville Roy 'Bud' graduated in 1950 (see, Icel. Can. June 1950). Son and daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Thorsteinsson, Norwood, Man. Granddaughter and grandson of the late Bjarni and Bjorg Thorsteinsson, Selkirk, Man.

Linda Hallson Scores In University Play



Linda Hallson

When the University of Manitoba players staged their annual play production, "Born Yesterday", by Garson Kanin, at the Playhouse Theatre, Nov. 30, Dec. 1 and 2, **Linda Hallson** received most of the bouquets from the press and public, for her vivacious portrayal of the ex-chorus girl.

The play, which had a long run in New York, is constructed in the popular sophisticated comedy manner, relying for effect almost entirely on the snappy dialogue. The first act, especially, sparkled with these brittle quips, which the University cast tossed off expertly, with an appropriately light touch.

Indeed, it proved so entertaining that, this reviewer, at least, had a definitely let-down feeling as the play began to sag noticeably in the second act and bogged down badly in the last act, in spite of the cast's valiant effort to keep up the pretense of high comedy and vitality.

In the first act especially, Linda Hallson portrayed admirably the bored, featherd-brained, ex-chorus girl. All her actions were vivid, her gestures appropriate, and her facial expressions extremely good, particularly in her reacting, which is often the most difficult of all. Her play of facial expressions, during the card-playing scene was excellent, and saved the scene from seeming too long-drawn out and ineffectual.

As well as praising the play and the cast in general, the daily press accorded high praise to Linda, for her portrayal of the role, the Tribune saying:

"The part of the ex-chorus girl is an extremely difficult role and Linda Hallson could have been content with a superficial characterization. It would have been satisfactory in an amateur company, but Miss Hallson turned in a performance of almost professional calibre."

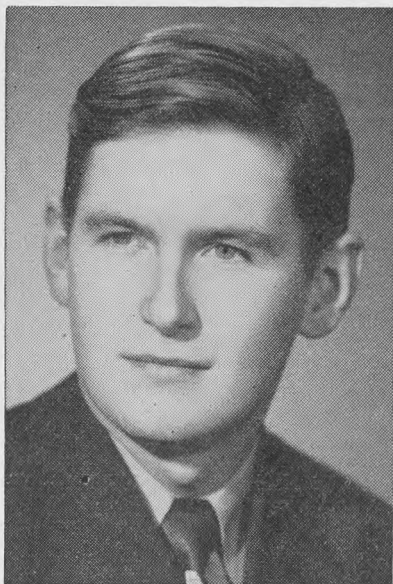
The Free Press says her portrayal was "exciting, vivacious and alive."

Linda is a daughter of Paul and Maria (Búason) Hallson of 714 Ellice Ave. She is in her third year at the University, taking Interior Decorating. Joan Stephenson, another girl of Icelandic descent, played adequately the small part of the hotel maid. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stephenson, 94 Evanson St. **H. D.**

Holman Kristinn Olson received his B.A. degree at the 71st Convocation of Manitoba University on Oct 29th. Holman has now entered his first year of the Manitoba Law School. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Holman Olson of Selkirk, Man.

Award Winners And Graduates

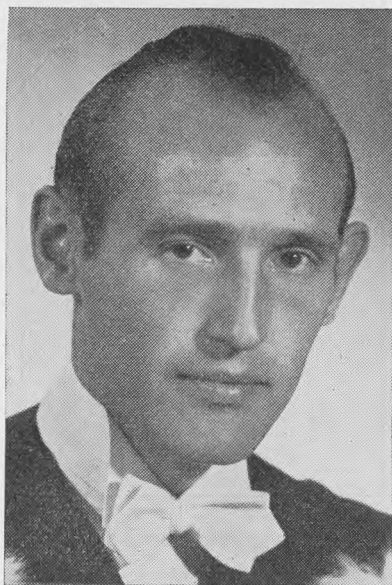
Brothers Study Agriculture



Ragnar L. Kristjanson of Gimli, Manitoba, senior in economics at North Dakota Agricultural College, has been awarded a graduate assistantship in agricultural economics at the University of Nebraska, Dr. G. E. Giesecke, dean of the N. D. A. C. school of applied arts and science, has announced.

A two-year programme for academic and research work has been planned for Kristjanson at Nebraska. He will complete work for his B. S. degree in economics next winter and then begin study for his M.S. degree in agricultural economics.

At N. D. A. C., Kristjanson is active in the Independent Students Association and the International Relations club. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Hannes Kristjanson of Gimli. Before coming to N. D. A. C., he attended one year at the University of Manitoba.



Albert Kristjanson, another son of Mr. and Mrs. Hannes Kristjanson has graduated from the Ontario Agricultural College at Guelph, Ont., on May 26, with the degree of B.Sc. in Agriculture. He has taken a position with the department of Agriculture in North Dakota.



WINS LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR'S GOLD MEDAL

Betty Joyce White received the lieutenant-governor's gold medal for highest standing in the second year of Arts, U. of M., including economics and history courses. The award was presented at the commencement exercises of United College on November 4th, 1950. (see Icel. Canadian of Dec. 1947 for story of Betty White.)

WINS TWO AWARDS IN MUSIC



Thora Asgeirson, who has been winning Scholarships, and prizes through her Musical studies, was awarded the University Gold Medal. (Awarded to students achieving the highest standing in the L.M.M. and the A.M.M. examinations, and who have previously passed three university practical Music Examinations, along with the corresponding theory.) Thora also won the Effie Dafoe Memorial Scholarship of \$100.00, sponsored by the Winnipeg Women's Club.

On Monday evening December 11th, Thora was heard in Recital over the Trans Canada network of the CBC, from 10.30 to 11 p.m.

Thora is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Asgeirsson, of Winnipeg.

★

GRADUATES IN NURSING

In May of this year **Miss Olof Holmfridur Jonasson** graduated from the Grace Hospital, Winnipeg, with first

class honors, she also received a medal in obstetrics.

Miss Jonasson was born in Winnipegosis. She is the daughter of Mrs. Sigríður Jónasson of Winnipeg and the late Adalbjorn Jonasson, and the granddaughter of Finnbogi Hjalmars-son.

★



Eirik Eirikson, B.A., LL.B. Son of Mr. and Mrs. Gudmundur Eirikson, formerly of Winnipeg, now of Vancouver.

Eirik lived in Winnipeg until he joined the Air Force in 1942. After serving Overseas as a flying Officer, he returned to Vancouver where he attended the University of British Columbia. He graduated in 1948 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and in 1949 with Bachelor of Law degree, and was admitted to the Bar of British Columbia in 1949. At present he is practicing at 513 Columbia St., New Westminster. He has been practicing there for a year now, having moved there shortly after his admission to the bar.

WINS TWO SCHOLARSHIPS



Thor Thorgrimsson

Thor Thorgrimsson, of 627 Agnes street, left recently for the University of Toronto to continue his studies in medieval history. He carries two scholarships; the Manitoba Brewers and Hotelmen welfare fund scholarship, valued at \$400, and the Ruben Wells Leonard fellowship scholarship, valued at \$500. The latter award comes from the University of Toronto.

Mr. Thorgrimsson is a graduate in arts of the United College.

Born in Hayland, Man., 30 years ago, Mr. Thorgrimsson attended public high schools in Lundar, Man., until the outbreak of the second world war when he enlisted in the Canadian army. He served for more than five years overseas with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps in Sicily, Belgium, Italy, France and Holland.

Mr. Thorgrimsson is married and has two children, a son, Stefan, two, and a daughter, Janet, seven months.

Upon completion of four years of study in Toronto, Mr. Thorgrimsson plans to become a university instructor.

Thor is the son of Mrs. Sigrun Thorgrimsson and the late Rev. Adam Thorgrimsson.

★

Winner of a \$150.00 St. James School Board Scholarship is **Una Johnson**, Grade XII student of 370 Albany St. The award, made for academic achievement, was announced Thursday at a board meeting.

★

MUSIC EXAMS.

Miss Pearl Halldorson, daughter of of Mr. and Mrs. Jon Halldorson, of Winnipeg, won honours in the A. R. C. T. piano-teachers' (written) exam.

Jon Frederick Page Sigurdson won honours in Counterpoint, — Grade IV Theory.

 LUNDAR CREAMERY WINS
AT CAN. NAT. EXHIBITION

At the recent Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto, the Lundar Creamery won two first prizes, one second prize, and a special prize for the best finished butter in section 1, and again in section 3. Also silver medal for the highest scoring butter in section 1. and again in section 3. The owner-manager of the creamery is Johann Breckman and the buttermaker is Grímur Sigurdson.

Creameries in Manitoba won all the special prizes, and 67% of the first group prizes awarded, and 52.7% of all the prizes awarded for butter at the exhibition.

Stephan G. Stephansson

(Continued from page 12)

but its language. The poet rests his hopes on the intelligent few:

Venture the faction of the few and free
To join, if you but know of three!

In order however to improve the lot of the many the poet is prepared to acquiesce in the desecration of nature; a waterfall, for instance, may be harnessed:

To lift a load a thousand could not
heave
So hands o'ertaxed and tired, rest
receive.

On the other hand the assertion of mastery over men is repugnant to him; indeed the tyrant merely debases himself:

More like a thrall than thralls will be
The thralls' house-master finally.

and the poet takes some comfort in the thought that such tyranny must often in the end make way before a more gentle power:

Than German might will prove more
strong
The Danish mothers' cradle-song.

Indeed to his soul animated by sympathy and understanding violence in any form was an utter anathema.

VI.

As a sociologist St. G. St. felt a deep sense of personal responsibility for all that goes awry in human society, whether it was internationally by way of wars, or internally, in the malpractices of individuals. He asserts that the

guilt of the transgressor is somehow partly his:

And oft meseems that I a share
In an offender's fault must bear,
Albeit innocent am I,
And nowise to the crime was nigh.

This deep sense of responsibility, this unyielding strictness with himself and his abiding honesty condition his entire outlook on life. One must face things as they are:

What good is his who dusk as
brightness deems?
He stays the lighting which all men
require.
To know that dusk is dark more blest
meseems:
It wakens in me for the dawn desire.

The poet cannot accept orthodox Christianity because to him it irrationally removes from man his responsibility:

That I believe this folly, friend,
think you,
That I my earlier debts can wipe
away
With the performance of duty new?
No kindly acts the older sins repay.

Indeed the poet asserts that for him disbelief brought the light of understanding and emancipation from the gloom of death:

She came like a gleam to the grave's
darkness cold,
And with her sheen shining did all
things enfold.
It seemed to me that through the ages
she glowed,
And to me the world's meaning transparent showed.

St. G. St. is very laudatory of the eloquent Unitarian Ingersoll, yet he is at pains to point out that he is not his subject nor his disciple, but only his less vigorous and younger brother. The poet is essentially a rationalist; "chance" is for him merely "a cause unknown" and the gods of men down through the ages have been moulded by "humanity's outlook of the moment".

VII.

If one were to single out a poem in which some of the basic ideas of the poet are expressed, perhaps the best choice would be the one entitled **Evening**. In this piece, St. G. St. after saying much in the pessimistic mood of a Matthew Arnold, ends with lines that may recall the invincible optimism of a Robert Browning:

When I in the twilight alone am become,
And trappings have tossed from me,
And Earth has pursued herself out of the sun,
So that in the shade is she,
And talk turns drowsy to canine yelps
And slumbers presently,

And life's care, that livelong day's watch, at my door
Downdrooping, asleep does sit; —
(She frightened up all of my light-winged lays,
So from me they songless flit;
She wing-broke each thought of mine soaring on high,
Intending the heav'ns for it.) —

How sore-fain I'd settle with all and forget
All too if I freely might
Have dreams, in the stillness and dusk, of the land
Which day has ne'er lit with light,
Where hopes out of wreckage, and bards' errant aims
May ever on shore alight.

The land in which naught the subventions high
Of heav'n need ever emend,
Where nobody's weal is another man's woe,
Nor might is the highest end,
Where vict'ry wounds none, where ordinance first
Is fairness, to which all bend.

But then comes the wakefulness, dreadful and wan,
That drives off my peace and rest,
And then me assail the lost souls who betrayed
The good that they had possessed,
And then loudly wail the wraith-outcasts of earth:
The powers that died suppressed.

And then I see opened deep agonies' depths,
With toil on bended knees,
While indolent pelf-quest on poverty thrives,
Like rot in the living trees:

The few the mad multitude's senses and will
 Bewilder and sway with ease.

For ever men's dealings are dubious all,
 And doubtful their amity,
 As he finds, who caught is by night, nigh a band
 Bivouaced for robbery,
 And, who with his eyes closed, can hear the foes are
 Approaching him stealthily.

It seems on earth wayless, the 'wilderling night
 Drags woefully on and on,
 As if the shades still had not thinned, and advance
 Were falsehood — so faint its dawn —
 For even of old mounted men's minds as high,
 And where then is aught that's won?

More widely for aye is Enlightenment borne,
 By each age a little brought. —
 She deepens not, mounts not, but lengthens her way,
 Like daylight is longer wrought,
 But man's lifetime brief, which the moment but marks,
 Yet knows of that difference naught.

But even to shepherds in solitude she
 Comes, calm as the dayspring bright,
 And gleams in their souls, though the glow is unseen —
 So silently comes her light,
 And I — who can sing to a Stygian world,
 Such staves on a sleepless night,

And climb can serenely the ultimate couch,
 From which I will part not me,
 Am sure that survives, with its warmth and its light,
 My every expectancy,
 And that what was best in my own soul lives, and
 The sunlight at least will be!

VIII.

The poet clearly had no hope of personal immortality. Hence when he is confronted with the death of one dear to him, he finds his only refuge in manly endurance. An excellent instance of this is found in the concluding poem of a series of four which he composed, over several years, for a much-beloved boy which he lost in childhood. The piece is marked by unaffected simplicity and a courageous close:

Good-bye to summer. Autumn, I greet thee,
 Upon the hill that is the boundary.

Behind me lies the region summer-long,
 With sunny mornings and soft plover's song.

In front a region nowise wide there shows,
 For on its midmost slope the sunset glows.

But think thou not in sorrow bowed I stand,
Though sink the sun to ev'ning's shadow-land.

With that land's lord I made my peace of yore,
And him I trust, for we have met before.

My farewell sure to my departed friend
Is: It is well with you where'er you wend.

And these exactly were my words when I
The last time bade my little boy good-bye.

But liefer to my mind became this ground,
And its dust dearer, since he rest here found.

Though quail the heart in grief-filled breast to go
The way that homewards leads it unto woe,

Yet for the man, who shrank not, it is sure
That grief unmended manhood makes endure.

IX.

As is natural, St. G. St. is much pre-occupied with Iceland. In one of his greatest Iceland-poems, written under the caption **In Defence of the Land**, the poet begins with a picturesque exordium on the maid of the mountains:

Of rhymes and runes thou Outgarth's
warden fairest,
Ocean's queen, set in either hem-
isphere,
Who mantle green and wind-blown
headgear wearest,
Our land of mountains, mother-island
dear.

In another celebration-piece he tells his audience that every Icelandic memory is a tablet of gold; here he avails himself of the theme of the greatest of the Eddic poems, **The Sibyl's Prophecy**.

You recall how it went, with antiquity
flown,
And the Anses' world burnt, and the
Flame-fiend o'erthrown,
And our earth laid in ruins,—the heav-
ens nine too, —

So the world and the sun had to wax
up anew:

Yet saved there was something on
which not the fire
Could make any headway: gold tablets
entire.

—Here, Canada, lapped in the shelter-
ing lea

Of summer, on sward warmed by sun-
light, sit we,

With similar gain: each remembrance
we hold

Of Iceland is for us a tablet of gold.

In the celebration-piece, which has become the cherished possession of Icelandic men wherever they are, St. G. St. asserts that every son of Iceland will ever bear in his mind and mien the features of his beloved land; for him it will be his heart's ideal:

Though all lands in long travels,

You should lay 'neath your feet,

In your mind and your heart yet

Your old homeland's marks meet!

You volcano and ice-sea,

Fall and geyser-fount bore!

Bred nigh scree-height and ling-heath!

Heir to skerry and shore!

O'er all earth and the heavens,
 In your thoughts you may fare,
 Still your falls and your fell-slopes
 All your Future's lands bear!
 Near Eternity's sea-rim
 Your dear isle doth abide,
 Like a world of spring nightless,
 Where the outlook is wide.

'Tis mid dream-haunts Icelandic
 That your heart-hopes e'er dwell,
 Wherein thawed is each glacier,
 And enflowered each fell!
 You volcano and ice-sea,
 Fall and geyser-fount bore!
 Bred nigh scree-height and ling-heath!
 Heir to skerry and shore!

And in one of his rare allusions to the classics, the poet yearns for the power of Orpheus to charm our western corn-

fields and woodlands overseas, to adorn the barren heaths of the homeland:

This no one knows as well as we,
 That we at times desire
 To win with art of witchery
 From Orpheus his lyre,

So we to eastward o'er the sea,
 To Iceland's moors had power
 To charm our grain and greenery
 Of woods, the wastes to dower.

But the poet on the other hand is certain that men of Icelandic lineage have precious gifts to bestow on the land of their adoption. Nowhere does he express this idea more vigorously than in one of his celebration-poems addressed to America:

Though so it prove that silenced be our lay
 'Bout burg and steadings, and though no one may
 Our tongue remember, to oblivion swept,
 Yet something there will evermore be kept
 And cherished in your bosom's fost'ring care,
 Which will of mind Icelandic witness bear.
 So much you need to earn you excellence,
 So many things, too, of a competence
 To match the profits of prosperity
 And men's aggressive urge of energy.
 Though granted be that gold have worth indeed,
 And that a people numbers large may need,
 Of assets for a nation to acquire
 The fairest are: the saga and the lyre.

X

It was however to Canada that St. G. St. felt the deepest loyalty. To this fosterland he dedicated, as he himself asserts, his toil, and here stood, he declares, the cradle of his children. Few if any have written more felicitously of our Canadian west. Beauties of

phrase and figure abound in his descriptions of the country from the Red River valley to the Rockies. At times he is arrestingly concise as when he speaks of "a sand-storm by sward-ropes bound", or leisurely and pictorial as for instance in his travel sequence **En Route**. Here is its opening stanza:

O'er prairies and marshes the engine us took
 the pathway that northwards e'er led.
 Mid silt on our left, there meandered along
 the muddy and haven-calm Red,

That lifts ne'er a foot o'er a channel or fall,
 for strength of e'en streams dies away,
 If wander they ever with water-arms filled
 by prairie-land's murkiest clay.
 All featureless was the whole outlook to view,
 save where the wood-goddesses' hands,
 On flats, along waterways' verges had laid
 their leaf-woven, clustering bands.
 The region itself like a limitless board,
 all knotless, there was to be seen,
 Which Nature had tilted a trifle on edge,
 and planed, and then painted in green.

At a later stage the description of the train rushing along in the night is even more striking. Here the poet identifies the engine with the Doom-ship of the Eddic mythology (**Nail-Farer**):

The train into space and the darkness its way
 circuitous, indistinct, dashed,
 And never more quick was its coursing than then:
 it spurted, and hurtled and flashed.
 But out from me, straight and unstaying, on high
 each star in the firmament raced;
 The engine spewed embers, in breath-spasms deep,
 whose sparks there up-eddied and blazed;
 The prairie, becalmed, floated, pitch-dark, about —
 a deluge, wave-void, unversed —
 And over that calm sea of shadows our train,
 like Nail-Farer, flame-freighted, surged.

But it was not the region of the Red nor of the Saskatchewan (of which he wrote also) that commanded the poet's main attention, but rather, as was natural; that of the Red Deer and the Rockies. The opulent majesty of his poem on the latter which at once made **The Bard of the Rockies** a synonym for him in all places in which Icelandic speech is spoken unfortunately defies translation: it is a veritable metrical **tour de force**. What St. G. St. did with mountain scenery is readily seen, on a smaller scale, in his lines on **Mount Lone-Dweller**:

So high o'er the lowly Mount Lone-Dweller towers,
 That ling-tufts in wonderment gaze on his bowers,
 And bushes turn dizzy so high up to crawl,
 And crag-blooms can find them no toe-hold at all.
 Albeit the blast that his summit all bare
 Oft harries, must cold be, retreats he yet ne'er:
 The hallowéd image of hardihood and
 Of frankness from fell chiselled there does he stand.

No Canadian poet is more deeply responsive to the wide reaches of our west. For St. G. St. the open spaces of Alberta are essential for the freedom of men in the New World. This he puts most emphatically in the closing

stanza of one of his admirable Alberta poems:

You I love, West's wild-land,
Lea of life and nurture,
With expanse extensive,
Rooming hopes unnumbered,
For without you nowhere
Would be fort 'gainst thralldom,
And the Western freedom
Be romance and falsehood.

Indeed with the poet's eye St. G. St. observes and with the artist's impulse delineates all the seasonal changes, all

the miens and moods, of his cherished home-region. It is under such influences, he asserts that his "weather-sensitive mind" moulds its verse.

XI.

Nowhere does St. G. St. express more felicitously than in the poem called **At Toil's Close**, the complete harmony between the poet's soul and his surroundings. Though it was written before he migrated to Canada, it may, in a sense, be regarded as the peaceful farewell of the farmer-poet.

When sunny slopes, on summer's eve, enswathed are
The shadows by,
And mid the branches of the trees the moon hangs
Her half-shield high,
And my perspiring brow begins to freshen
Eve's breath-cool breeze,
And, after day's work, each worn power welcomes
The night-tide's peace;

When out afield the flocks' bells tinkle clearly
And quietly,
And in the woods a bird's eve-song sounds singly
And plaintively,
And in a half-stave seems the breeze to lisp when
Most loud is she,
And laughter lief of bairns by brook's marge playing
Is borne to me;

But like spots moonlit shine the fields of grain 'gainst
The azure ground,
And haze light-gray the hollows fills, and fills too
Each dell and sound,
And lowest to the east the golden stars through
The branches gleam,
Then in the eve's calm sit I outside under
My gable's beam.

For full my heart is then of rest and joy,
Of peace my soul;
And then meseems that blitheness love and beauty
Be world's words sole,
And that all things are blessing me and for me
My pray'rs impart,
And that the earth and heaven are at rest on
The eve's kind heart.

But when at last, the day done, the accounting
 To end is brought,
 And at whatever worth the world may value
 The work I've wrought,
 In such a calm I fain would be to fashion
 A feeling lay,
 And give the world a reconciling hand-clasp
 At close of day.

XII

St. G. St. appears to have been little influenced by English poetry; indeed of modern English verse he had a rather poor opinion. His only poem on an English writer is a peculiar one on Shakespeare entitled **The Robber**. He also wrote a fragmentary piece called **An Epilogue to Byron's English Bards and Scotch Reviewers**.

From English or any other language St. G. St. translated very little; he was too original and too independent a poet to indulge in the restatement of the ideas of others. It should however be observed in passing that the few versions he made are extremely well executed. He evidently selected them because they were congenial to his feelings and his philosophy. Representative pieces are: Ingersoll's verse on death, Tennyson's lines on honest doubt (**In Mem.** 96, 11-12), Longfellow's **The Village Blacksmith**, Kipling's **If**, Robert Service's **The Stretcher Bearer**, and **The Last Leaf** and **The Chambered Nautilus** by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

On the other hand very little has as yet been done by learned Canadians to bring this great Icelandic-Canadian poet to the attention and the knowledge of their fellow-citizens. It is to be hoped that today and its proceedings here may stimulate men's interest in this man and his works. In the near future there will be inaugurated at the University of Manitoba, a Department of Icelandic Language and Liter-

ature. It will, I take it, be one of the primary tasks of the prospective incumbent of this chair, to interpret for Icelandic-Canadians, and for their fellow citizens as well, the mind and art of Stephan G. Stephansson, whose significance both Alberta and Canada at large are on this occasion so signally recognizing for all times to come.

 With necessary alterations this address on Stephan G. Stephansson was given again in Winnipeg on September 18th, under the auspices of the Jon Sigurðson Chapter of the I.O.D. E. in aid of its fund for the Chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba. The speaker took the opportunity of enlarging somewhat the scope of his former remarks. The principal additions were the following matters:

(1). A translation of the poem **The Fosterland** which was read in the original Icelandic at the ceremony in Markerville by Ófeigur Sigurdsson, a friend of St. G. St. of long standing:

Land to which is hallowéd
 My toil, my children's cradle-stead!
 Put have I in lay and line
 Mid thy grasses poems mine;
 Later will thy grass for me
 Make o'er my head poetry.
 With thee as home my mind
 And heart are intertwined.
 I do not in millions measure
 At how much thy worth I treasure,
 Nor do I in verse enfold

All thy praises hundred-fold.
 Be thou not rich, my heart
 Sings out that such than art:
 Destitute joyed I
 Thy fells and fields anigh.
 This then is verdict thine:
 Thou wert delight of mine.
 Far off if from thy side,
 Out to the World's haunts wide,
 Were I to migrate, I
 Would for thy sunlight sigh,

And miss thy sleet-storms, land
 Bare, and upbuildéd land,
 Storm-land and shelter-land,
 Land of both dell and height,
 Dusk's land, and land of light,
 Land to which is hallowéd
 My toil, my children's cradle-stead!

(2) A translation of a few lines of
 humorous verse entitled **The Potent
 Poets:**

'Tis noised now, as greatest news, in whispers low,
 That potent poets in the Westland do not grow.

But, brothers, we shall show the world our competence,
 For actions are irrefutable evidence.

But we who **Lögberg** filled with verses mire-fraught,
 And made the ditties that **Heimskringla** drove distraught,

We have, I think, the charge against us put to flight,
 Though we have not as yet employed half our might.

And they their papers treble may, if they but dare,
 For everything will nonetheless the same way fare.

(3) The following entire passage was interpolated: —

It is sometimes asserted that St. G. St. was rather cold and indeed deficient in affection. In several passages the poet expresses his awareness of this charge and indicates that he has no desire to win with his verse the love of a maiden with her first novel on her lap. Yet such poems as those entitled **Kurly** and **The Pretty Eyes** clearly show the poet's feeling for girlhood and womanhood. Indeed in his

poem called **Amatory Verses to Iceland** he explicitly asserts that he delights in everything that is beautiful wheresoever it be "even", he slyly adds, "on the face of a maiden", for he does not believe that "it is at all more unseemly to admire a lovely lass than it is to admire a beautiful bud". Nowhere does St. G. St. show better his insight into the imaginative mind of a maiden than in his simple rural piece entitled **The Errand-Lass**.

"Run out to the strait", to the maiden said I
 "And fetch me my Gray, and now speedily fly!"

And lightfooted ran she, as fleet as the hind,
 But her return tarried. I waited, my mind

Kept count of the hours recalling for me
 So much about human degeneracy,

And powers judicial, and judgments and laws,
That I turned a pamphlet of ethical saws,

Of punishment and about vengeance sure,
And I like a synod's committee was dour.

So finally when to the home-field she led
My horse, I ran hurriedly up, and I said,

As I the rein snatched from her, "You will receive
A thorough good whipping, my girlie, this eve".

"For heedlessness", added I harshly to her,
"Does punishment which it has earned it incur".

But startled at this, to herself did she say:
"Ah, sunrise, you did my returning delay".

I off my guard was, and a smile gave thereat,
Yet brusquely I queried: "In what way was that?"

"In this way it chances", she answered me, "When
The sun is bright-shining I many things then

Behold in the world that are novel: night's dew
Seems silver and gold, and with sea-vapour blue,

The vales all are filled, and the fell-tops upbear
More black, as if tarred ships were voyaging there.

The tree's crests uploom like to crag-bands at sea;
A hunting-place seems yonder heath-bush to be,

With silken nets spread out, the branches between,
All shining like silver, and ever so clean.

A throng is astir by the school-house's thatch:
The swallows there flying are having a match.

'Tis likely their national festival; they
At any rate are not forbidden to play."

She ended her story — I did not hear how —
But I her hair curly brushed back from her brow.

The bard-maiden's morn-lay, so moving, did melt
The mood of revenge that my spirit had felt.

Nowhere does St. G. St. combine more felicitously affection for a maiden and his feeling for nature than in his lyric **A Love Poem (Mansöngur)**: how dexterously the poet identifies the qualities of his charmer with the characteristics of the springtide!

If true it is, as oft is said,
That all the grave does not find room,
But traces are here of the dead,
And some light shade eludes the tomb,
Which, staying on the outer side
Of the grave's gateway closed, does bide.

If true it is! Then sure am I
That in the clammy cemet'ry,
In dusk, mine will not wand'ring hie,
But goodly, jolly girl, seek thee,
And with thee, cherished maid, each morn
Out mid the spring and light be borne.

But still suspicion seizes me
Which had my mind beguiled so long,
That spring beloved embodied thee
And that, to rouse the bard to song,
Thy outward semblance had the spring
Assumed, to give him theme to sing.

So seems it I did not behold,
Amid thy tresses' amber-gleam,
The sheen that shines from springtide's gold,
Which makes in May the woodlands beam,
When on the boughs the leaves that first
Had come to life, at noon out-burst.

The youthful look that is upon
Thy brow, so high and broad and fair,
Derives from distant eastern dawn,
When soft and warm is all the air.
It bears the dawning's beauteous light,
But back of it are beams more bright.

The dark eyes 'neath thy dusky brow,
So deep and bright with morn's blithe beam,
With light seemed all things to endow,
So dewy leaves in sunlight gleam,
When out of rain-clouds dark their glow
At dawn, the rising sun's rays show.

And woven deemed I in thy mien
Were joy of spring, reliance sure,
And blitheness frank, and there was seen
About thy form the fairness pure
Which from the growth-bestowing rains
The green and slender sapling gains.

And though a fall-like gust is felt
A little while thy mood to chill,
Immediately does it melt,
For stubborn is not spring in will,

Though o'er the highest heights it strow
At times, by chance, the crystal snow.

And ever deemed I brought to light
Thy words a world of beauty sheer;
Then did the old all sink from sight,
And an horizon new appear.
So changes springtide fields and trees,
And widens the world's boundaries.

'Twas as if in the mind of me
Thou fixed hadst inmost eyes of thine,
And as if something guided thee
To goodliest of verses mine.
So springtide finds the flower-blade
Which bides in solitude and shade.

That still is something that is true
Can no one doubt who thee is nigh;
That life is young, and gladsome too,
Deem all who did thee hear or eye.
So spring the whole mind gives new might,
And spurs to verse and wingéd flight.

From this I know, if true it be
That shades of men bide here, when glow
The gleams of springtide cheerfully,
On lengthy days with thee I'll go.
I'll come in light, a kiss I'll seize,
And sing to thee in summer's breeze.

Does superstition me beguile,
And folly, that though to His side
The Lord me snatch, a little while
Some thought of mine behind may bide,
And that my little lay of thee
Outlive may in this manner me?

(4) In conclusion the speaker referred to his pilgrimage to the poet's old home and to the poet's grave, to which he was accompanied by the surviving offsprings of the bard and by others. As he stood before the memorial cairn raised in the family plot

by admiring and loving Icelandic friends, there came to his mind a quotation from the Roman poet Propertius which gives in a measure an inkling of the emotion he felt. The idea of the Latin lines may be thus expressed:

Just as we may,
In statues high, not touch the head, and lay
Here at their feet our wreath, so, lacking might
To mount in measures to thy merit's height,
We give to thee our common frankincense,
In offerings of our poor competence.

And as the speaker drove away from the countryside in which the bard had laboured for such a large portion of his life, he repeated to himself a stanza about a great scholarly son of

Iceland which seemed to him to be equally appropriate to the unlettered poetic genius of Stephan G. Stephansson. The meaning of the verse is this:

While the aged peaks of Iceland
 Rise from out the depths of ocean,
 And while folk in northern regions
 Speak Icelandic speech unsullied,
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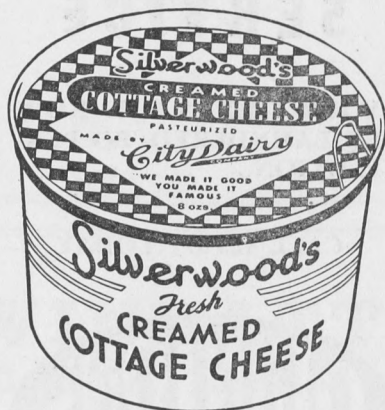
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